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THE  
BAMPTON LECTURES

FOR THE YEAR MDCCCXXIV.

BEING

AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE THE HISTORY

AND

TO ASCERTAIN THE LIMITS

OF THE

SECONDARY AND SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION  
OF SCRIPTURE.

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BY

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OXFORD,

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS FOR THE AUTHOR.

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PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, LONDON.

1824.



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27, Gower Street. Monday, June 7, 1824.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I enclose the proofs, with the Title, Preface, and Contents. Can you have the goodness to let me have proofs of these latter by Wednesday night's coach, as I leave town on Friday. I will then forward the Errata, and any supplementary Notes which may seem needful, with all speed.

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

J. J. CONYBEARE.”

*To Mr. Collingwood.*

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THE above note fully explains the Author's intention with respect to the completion of his work. His sudden and lamented death, on Friday June the 11th, prevented its execution; and it is judged inexpedient to delay the publication by attempting to supply these deficiencies.





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## INTRODUCTION.

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**T**HE subject of the following Lectures was some years back strongly brought under the writer's notice by circumstances on which it is unnecessary to dwell. In the course of his inquiries he could not but observe, that no work had as yet appeared in our own language professedly dedicated to the history and criticism of this branch of scriptural exposition. How far he has been successful in the attempt to supply this deficiency must be left to the judgment of others. For himself he can say with truth, that he is conscious of many defects both in his plan and its execution. In extenuation, however, of such defi-

ciencies or inaccuracies as may be discovered by more experienced scholars, he would urge, that his materials were arranged, and the greater part of his work composed, at a considerable distance from those literary resources which are to be found only in our larger public libraries.

He has been careful, as far as it was in his power, to draw his own materials from, and refer the student to, original sources of information, rather than to transcribe the compilations of more modern writers. Where he is indebted to these latter only, the acknowledgment will usually be found in the notes. Should his labours tend in the smallest degree to lighten those of others, or even to call their attention to the details of a subject possessing certainly no inconsiderable interest for the theologian, his object will be fully attained. At all events it is his hope and prayer, that

the following pages may not be found to contain any thing injurious to the faith, or repugnant to the feelings of the pious and sincere believer.

*June 1824.*







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*Turn not unto the right hand nor to the left.*

Proposed limitations.



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# EXTRACT

FROM

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN BAMPTON,

CANON OF SALISBURY.

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—— “ I give and bequeath my Lands and Estates to  
“ the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University  
“ of Oxford for ever, to have and to hold all and sin-  
“ gular the said Lands or Estates upon trust, and to the  
“ intents and purposes hereinafter mentioned ; that is to  
“ say, I will and appoint that the Vice-Chancellor of  
“ the University of Oxford for the time being shall take  
“ and receive all the rents, issues, and profits thereof,  
“ and (after all taxes, reparations, and necessary deduc-  
“ tions made) that he pay all the remainder to the en-  
“ dowment of eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be  
“ established for ever in the said University, and to be  
“ performed in the manner following :

“ I direct and appoint, that, upon the first Tuesday in  
“ Easter Term, a Lecturer be yearly chosen by the Heads  
“ of Colleges only, and by no others, in the room adjoin-  
“ ing to the Printing-House, between the hours of ten in  
“ the morning and two in the afternoon, to preach eight  
“ Divinity Lecture Sermons, the year following, at St.



“ Mary’s in Oxford, between the commencement of the  
 “ last month in Lent Term, and the end of the third  
 “ week in Act Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight Divinity  
 “ Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon either of the  
 “ following Subjects—to confirm and establish the Chris-  
 “ tian Faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics  
 “ —upon the divine authority of the holy Scriptures—  
 “ upon the authority of the writings of the primitive  
 “ Fathers, as to the faith and practice of the primitive  
 “ Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour  
 “ Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity of the Holy Ghost—  
 “ upon the Articles of the Christian Faith, as compre-  
 “ hended in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight Divinity  
 “ Lecture Sermons shall be always printed, within two  
 “ months after they are preached, and one copy shall  
 “ be given to the Chancellor of the University, and one  
 “ copy to the Head of every College, and one copy to  
 “ the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one copy to be  
 “ put into the Bodleian Library; and the expense of  
 “ printing them shall be paid out of the revenue of the  
 “ Land or Estates given for establishing the Divinity  
 “ Lecture Sermons; and the Preacher shall not be paid,  
 “ nor be entitled to the revenue, before they are printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall be  
 “ qualified to preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons, un-  
 “ less he hath taken the degree of Master of Arts at  
 “ least, in one of the two Universities of Oxford or Cam-  
 “ bridge; and that the same person shall never preach  
 “ the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice.”



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# LECTURE I.

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PROVERBS xxii. 20.

*Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels  
and knowledge?*

IT has been repeatedly and most justly noticed, both as matter of admiration and of gratitude, as at once among the strongest evidences and the most valuable characteristics of our Christian faith, that under the covenant and dispensation of grace, the things most essentially necessary to man's salvation are revealed in the plainest and most unequivocal terms, are made (wheresoever the perversity of the human will does not oppose itself to the teaching of the Spirit of God) clear and intelligible to all men. We have confidence that in that gospel, the ministration of which is entrusted to our stewardship, the power and presence and holiness of God, the

weak and fallen nature of man, the pardon and reconciliation secured and offered in Christ to all who believe and repent, the agency and influence of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of the Christian's living under that influence, not unto himself, but unto his Master, are broadly and visibly impressed in characters which, if they be overlooked or misrepresented, can serve only to testify the more strongly against the carelessness or presumption of him by whom such offence cometh.

But that every part of Scripture is (even to those who bring to its study and explanation all the varied aids of intellect and of learning) equally devoid of obscurity and difficulty, no one, perhaps, has ever seriously maintained. Some persons indeed, in the heat and hurry of controversy, or under the impulse of strong, but undisciplined religious feeling, may, at times, indiscreetly have held language which should appear to imply some notion or conviction to this effect; but, in truth, all who profess to accept and to search the Scriptures as the record and testimony of God, (with-

out the exception even of those whom we regard, not perhaps unjustly, as leaning to the side of error and enthusiasm,) do uniformly and systematically admit, that a partial, though not always an impenetrable cloud yet rests upon the sanctuary of divine truth, do virtually shew this to be their deliberate opinion, by constantly availing themselves of such helps and instruments for the understanding and illustration of Scripture as lie within their reach, and are at unison with their respective views of the Christian scheme.<sup>a</sup>

Among the various difficulties thus generally acknowledged to be attendant upon the closer and more detailed study of the oracles of God, few are more calculated to excite the inquiry of the serious and intelligent reader—few indeed have more divided the opinions of the ablest expositors, than those arising out of what has been

<sup>a</sup> There is not, I believe, a single religious community of any note or magnitude in this country, that has not its *accredited* commentaries and elucidations of the Scripture, and does not feel a pride in its association with the piety or talents which have been employed in their production.

termed by some their *mystical* or *spiritual*, by others their *secondary* or *mediate* sense ; whether we regard the question as affecting the whole of the inspired writings, or as restricted to those portions of them which we are accustomed more emphatically to designate as the Law and the Prophets. That this mode of interpretation is, to a certain point at least, authorized by the usage of the divinely commissioned writers of the New Testament must be allowed by all, excepting those who, in the pride and rashness of their hearts, have ventured, directly or indirectly, to question the inspiration of that record. The extent to which subsequent writers of doctrinal and practical theology have considered themselves at liberty to pursue the same track, is generally known to have varied very considerably according to their age, school genius, and other local or personal circumstances. On the one hand, allegorical or spiritual meanings have been attached not only to those passages of Moses and the Prophets which our Lord and his disciples expressly refer to as typical or

prophetical of the person and office of the Messiah, and the economy of his covenant, but to every part, whether historical or preceptive, of the Old Testament, and to much even of the New. It has been contended virtually, if not in so many words, that whatsoever meaning of this nature the ingenuity or piety of the expositor might affix to any given passage of Scripture, was in reality the sense of that passage, the express intention of him who gave it, and that in this mode of exposition and application alone was to be found the *spirit which giveth life, the wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation*. These opinions were at a very early period believed to derive no small countenance from that passage, or rather from a very remarkable misconstruction of that passage, of the Book of Proverbs which has been chosen for our text. The word which is there rendered *excellent things*, and which might be rendered *precepts, rules, or directions*, is known to be derived from a root originally signifying the number *three*; by what process or connection of ideas, it is not re-



quisite, perhaps at this distance of time it would be impossible, to ascertain. Hence the authors of the Septuagint render it by *τρισσῶς*, and those of the Vulgate by *tripliciter*. To this source a learned but not always candid writer<sup>b</sup> on the interpretation of Scripture would refer all those explanations which deviate from the primary and literal meaning of the sacred text. The position is unquestionably much too vague and unguarded; but it is in all probability true, that they who indulged in the full latitude of mystical and allegorical exposition, did imagine themselves to derive much support from this and some similar passages.

On the other hand, many divines, even among those justly entitled to our respect and gratitude, fearful perhaps of the evils which might be supposed to result, both to those within and those without, from the admission of a principle of interpretation so lax and variable, have kept, with a prudence bordering somewhat too much upon coldness and timidity, what they esteemed

<sup>b</sup> Whitby, Diss. de S. S. Interpret. in loco.

the safer path; while of later years a school has arisen, happily not in our own Church or country, but yet a school which possibly may not be without its share of influence upon our theological students, openly and professedly discarding as irrational and uncritical all spiritual and allegorical interpretations whatsoever, and including in one sweeping and indiscriminate censure the human expositions of Origen and Augustin, of Cocceius and Vitringa, and the inspired parallelisms of the Epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>c</sup> “De typis” (says the author of a work well calculated to give a general insight into the spirit of modern German theology) “non amplius esse potest sermo. “Permittamus eos interpretibus Judæis eorumque fautoribus, talibus enim *nugis* non eget religio nostra divina.” (*J. G. C. Hoepfner Introd. in Theologiæ Dogm. Historiam Lit. Lipsiæ, 1821.*) It were easy to multiply authorities to the same purpose from the numerous followers of Semler or Rosenmuller. They have been successfully opposed by the Roman Catholic professor Jahn, (certainly one of the most learned and candid writers of his communion.) See *Hermeneutica V. et N. T. Viennæ, 1812.* pp. 43 and 91, and the preface to the Appendix Hermeneutices. Morus, confessedly the ablest and most moderate of the *liberal* school, saw and regretted the extent to which his contemporaries pushed



It is needless perhaps to say, that the scepticism to which I allude forms a prominent feature of that system of biblical criticism, which has very widely, it might be said, almost universally, obtained in the protestant churches of continental Europe. It has had for its public advocates men unquestionably of extensive erudition, and much ingenuity in the minuter details of literature; but little distinguished by any of the higher powers of intellect, and yet less by the reasonable and pious submission of that intellect to the revealed word and will of its great author.

these speculations: “ Qui admittunt Christi et Apostolorum auctoritatem, hi debent Prophetarum libris fidem ad historiam, ad doctrinam, et ad vaticinia concedere, iisque ad docendam, discendam, exercendamque religionem opportune et cum delectu uti, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. et præstant hunc usum siquis iis opportune et cum dilectu uti didicerit. *Indignæ sunt Christianis voces, quæ passim sparguntur, contemtrices librorum V. T.*” (*Mori Epitome Theol. Christ. Ed. 4ta. Lipsiæ, 1799. p. 24.*) The work of Hoepfner referred to above will abundantly shew the remonstrance to have been ineffectual. The general disposition of this class of divines is well exposed in C. S. Weiss’ Disput. de Homine submitte, &c. consilio Dei de uno Christo ac Domino Jesu. Lipsiæ, 1796.

By all those, who are happily free from the influence of such untenable and unchristian theories, it will probably be admitted without scruple, that any endeavour to *investigate the history and to ascertain the proper limits of this species of interpretation*, cannot, if modestly and soberly conducted, be without its share of interest to the theological student, both from its importance to the right understanding and exposition, and in some degree even to the practical and spiritual uses of holy Scripture, as well as from the conflicting opinions which have long prevailed on the subject. Neither am I aware that any work expressly dedicated to such investigation has as yet been attempted in our own language or country. This congregation indeed cannot be ignorant that the subject has been incidentally touched upon by some, whose labours, had they been more extended, would in all probability have rendered the present undertaking needless and presumptuous, and he who now addresses you could of a truth be well contented to aspire to no higher praise

than that of having patiently and carefully filled up the outline which has been thus traced by the hands of earlier and more accomplished masters. If in the execution of this task he be enabled in the smallest measure to guard those who are entering on the study of theology, on the one hand, from the fanciful and enthusiastic misapplication of scriptural language and imagery, and, on the other, from the yet more dangerous and culpable misapplication of learning and of talent which would deprive the word of light and life of its spiritual, nay, of its very prophetic and authoritative character; he may be regarded, he trusts, as having aimed at a strict compliance with the intentions expressed by the pious founder of these Lectures.

Fully aware that much of imperfection and even of error must be discoverable in the treatment of a subject confessedly of such extent and intricacy, he can only hope that neither their amount or character will be found such, as may, in any point of material importance, tend to mislead the student, or to injure the cause of that

truth which it is the object of all our ministrations to recommend, and to preserve inviolate. It will readily too be anticipated, that in this inquiry much that is offered must of necessity be rather of an historical than of an argumentative or practical nature; even here, however, inferences and applications must continually suggest themselves which may not be without their immediate use in the formation and direction of our own principles and judgment. It is both useful and gratifying to find, that those opinions which we believe to be grounded on the firm warranty of Scripture and of reason, have received the support of the wise and pious in former ages. The errors too of past times bear in many cases no small analogy to these of our own; and, yet more, the causes which are the most fertile in the production of all error, are perhaps always, with some slight modifications of external circumstance, essentially the same. Wherever therefore the history of human opinions presents opportunities of such deduction and illustration, he who wishes to render that history useful and

instructive, will naturally avail himself of them as frequently and fully as it may be done, without incurring the charge of having perverted the facts, or overstated their resemblance.

May He, by whose inspiration all Scripture was given, enable us, of his great goodness, to derive from these and every like inquiry the materials of Christian edification and improvement.

Before we proceed to the historical part of this investigation, (which, for many obvious reasons, has the first claim upon, and will occupy the larger share of our attention,) I would premise, that, by the term *mystical* or *spiritual*, I would understand *every species of interpretation which attaches to the words of Scripture any sense whatsoever beyond that which is strictly literal and historical*. Thus it will include much that is prophetic and all that is typical. Those parts indeed of the prophecies, which directly announce the coming, and describe the person and office, of our blessed Lord in terms fairly applicable to no other person or condition of things, will alone be

excluded from our consideration. For the present, no advantage, that I am aware of, will be gained, by pausing to examine the critical truth or value, either of that three-fold division of the mystical sense of Scripture, which for many ages obtained in the Church, and to which the divines of the Romish communion still seem to adhere;<sup>d</sup> or those enumerations of its alledged varieties, and of their distribution<sup>e</sup> throughout the revealed word, for which we are indebted to the systematic and pious labours of more recent theologians.

However we may scruple (as many in the fair and legitimate exercise of private judgment doubtless will scruple) to follow

<sup>d</sup> “Sensus mysticus” (I quote one of the *latest* Roman Catholic authorities to which I have access) “in *tropologicum* seu *moralem*, in *allegoricum* et in *anagogicum* “dividitur.” *Seb. Schaaf. Præll. de Locis Theol. Permissu super. Francof. ad Mæn. 1774. v. i. p. 392.* The more inquisitive reader may consult the *Bibliotheca sancta* of Sixtus Senensis, L. 3. sub initio. See also the extract from Bellarmine, *De Verbo Dei*, given by Marckius, *Comment. in De Moor*, vol. i. p. 394.

<sup>e</sup> “*Sedes classicæ* in quibus sensus mysticus velut in-  
“quilinus et domesticus esse solet.” *Rambach de Sensu Mystico*, p. 12.



even the more learned and eminent of these to the full extent of their respective theories; yet, that such a secondary and spiritual meaning was, from the earliest period, partially at least, involved in the traditional and written monuments of the Jewish faith, cannot, we hold, be fairly and successfully denied; cannot even be doubted by any one who, with a belief in their inspiration, and an unprejudiced and impartial frame of mind, applies himself to the study of the books of Moses. Nor can this position be reasonably objected to *a priori* as appearing unnatural or improbable; for in the earlier and simpler stages of society and of language, such a mode of giving form and utterance to the conceptions of mind, so far from seeming rare and unintelligible, is known to have been usually more prevalent and popular. The original signification of those metaphors, which make up so large a part of all language both spoken and written, must then have been fresher in the memory of man; they were daily, if we may so express ourselves, in the process of being increased in their

number, and extended and modified in their import, as the occurrence of new ideas or new associations demanded. The mind habituated to this process would catch and retain, with quite sufficient rapidity and distinctness, the truths and instructions conveyed through the medium of those images and allegories, which in fact do so largely and constantly present themselves in the literature, both sacred and secular, of the ruder ages. It may be added, that the wisdom and theology of the Egyptians, to whose customs the Israelites had been so long inured, appear, from the remotest antiquity to which we can trace them, to have been involved in figurative and mystical representations. The whole hieroglyphical system must have been little else than a tissue of metaphor and allegory addressed to the eye instead of the ear. These considerations might well lead us to suspect, that even they whom we regard as having needlessly and fancifully assumed or exaggerated the mystical sense of many parts of the Mosaic record, are at least not more *unphilosophical* than they



who utterly proscribe every interpretation of the kind, however sanctioned by the authority of the New Testament, or countenanced by fair and reasonable analogies. And indeed the notion that the Israelites saw nothing spiritual in the words and works of the Law, that they understood in the lowest and most barely literal sense all that was written for their instruction and prescribed for their observance, must subject those who would maintain it to a yet further charge of paradox and inconsistency. It is confessed on all hands that the writings of Moses distinctly set forth the unity, omnipotence, and other leading attributes of the Deity, as the fundamental and distinguishing tenets of the religion given to the Israelites. But, to a people thus enlightened, the same record in its very commencement describes the Almighty as resolving *to make man in his own image*. Now can we readily believe either them or their teacher to have conceived that the great I AM bore the aspect and character of the human species, or to have understood by such an expression any thing re-

ferring to the physical and external constitution of man. Again, the Mosaic law confessedly forbids (and that under the severest penalties) every species of idolatrous worship; but we find the very Lawgiver expressly commanding his followers to look, for the removal of the fiery venom which infected their host, to an image, which, if they did not see and acknowledge in it the type of some higher and more spiritual deliverer, must have been to them an idol not less absurd than those of their Egyptian taskmasters, if indeed it were not the very semblance of one of the many creatures worshipped by that extraordinary people; an idol which in aftertimes became, we are told, of a truth a snare and cause of offence, and was in consequence destroyed by the piety of the faithful Hezekiah.<sup>f</sup>

Nor is more direct authority wanting to this purpose: the rite by which the Hebrew was initiated into the privileges and blessings of the covenant was expressly declared by him through whom it was en-

<sup>f</sup> 2 Kings viii. 4.

joined to have a spiritual meaning<sup>s</sup>; the golden frontlet worn by the high priest, and the bells and pomegranates which formed a conspicuous part of the sacerdotal vestments, were worn, we are told, the one that he might *bear the iniquity of the holy things of the people*; the other, that when he went into and came forth from the holy place, *he should not die*<sup>h</sup>. Now that such a virtue resided in the plate of gold, inscribed even as it was with *Holiness unto the Lord*, or in the mere semblance of the fruit and sound of the metal, could not surely have been for a moment credited by those who had been so clearly taught that Jehovah dwelt not in images of silver or of gold, nor in any work of man's hands.

To a people too, thus instructed, the whole system of expiatory sacrifice must have appeared intelligible and reasonable only upon the supposition of its being figurative or allegorical. Admitting readily, that even the most pious and spiritually minded among them might be far from understanding the precise nature and full

<sup>s</sup> Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Exodus xxiii. 35, 38.

value of that great sacrifice which we (neither unscripturally, we trust, nor irrationally) believe to have been thus shadowed out, we would yet contend that they must have regarded that which of a truth *purged their iniquities*, the *iniquities* even of their *holy things*, as somewhat far higher and more available than the *blood of bulls and goats*, and the *sprinkled ashes of the heifer*.

The truth and reasonableness of this view of the Mosaic records has been acknowledged, until within the last half century, by the whole, or nearly the whole of the Christian church. It is yet possible that they who are inclined to disregard and undervalue the authority of most systematic theologians, however respectable, may attach somewhat more of critical weight to the avowed opinion of one, whose erudition and acuteness were united in no common degree with a boldness of speculation somewhat congenial to their own.

“ Quod Moses (says the learned Spencer)  
“ Messiam et summa ejus beneficia virtu-  
“ tesque tanquam ultimum verborum su-  
“ orum scopum sibi præfixum habuerit, ea

“ratione (by his own theory, that is, as to the Urim and Thummim) “luce quæ omnem dubitationis umbram pellet ostendi potest.” In the same paragraph he acknowledges unhesitatingly the distinction between the “Scriptura exterior cujus sensus minime difficilis se cuivis offert,” and the “Scriptura interior *legis mirabilia* continens, quæ ut planius et apertius intueatur psalmista oculos resectos expetit<sup>i</sup>.”

Few will be disposed to question the fact, that a similar use of figurative expression and action pervades nearly the whole of the prophetic writings. Doubts may indeed in some cases be raised as to the precise objects shadowed out under such mystical imagery; but all must be convinced that the marriage of Hosea<sup>j</sup>, the walking naked and barefoot of Isaiah<sup>k</sup>, the linen girdle<sup>l</sup>, the potter's vessel<sup>m</sup>, the good and evil figs<sup>n</sup>, and the bond and yoke of Jeremiah<sup>o</sup>, and the splendid and lengthened visions of Ezekiel and of Daniel, were all

<sup>i</sup> De Urim et Thummim, p. 320. ed. 1670.      <sup>j</sup> Ch. i.

<sup>k</sup> Ch. xx.      <sup>l</sup> Ch. xiii.      <sup>m</sup> Ch. xix.      <sup>n</sup> Ch. xxiv.

<sup>o</sup> Ch. xxvii. xxviii.

in their several kinds symbolical and typical, and that the frequency of these representations shews them to have been addressed to a people habituated to and capable of readily apprehending such vehicles of instruction and warning.

It will be sufficient for our present purpose to have touched thus briefly upon matters which cannot be otherwise than familiar to every instructed Christian. They might safely indeed have been left to suggest themselves to the recollection of my hearers<sup>p</sup>, but that the passing them entirely unnoticed might be construed into somewhat like the tacit acquiescence in the opinions of those who contend for the literal, and the literal sense alone; whereas they do present in truth the most direct and intelligible answer to the assumptions and cavils of these self-named rationalists.

Nor have we less substantial grounds for believing that in later ages the spiritual interpretation of the Law and the Prophets

<sup>p</sup> See Jahn's *Hermeneutica*, p. 43. and the highly useful and comprehensive work of Mr. Horne, *Introduction*, &c. vol. i. p. 203.



had the countenance and support, if not of the Jewish church as a collective and authoritative body, yet of many in that church, of all those assuredly who in faith and truth looked for the consolation of Israel. It is a remark sufficiently trite, but not the less true, that a good cause is frequently rather injured than served by the exertions, however well intentioned, of those over credulous and sanguine advocates, who, by attempting to prove more than is fairly deducible from the circumstances of the case, weaken and dilute, instead of augmenting, the force of those arguments which rest on less infirm and questionable grounds. Students who are habituated to the more accurate and severe deductions of sound criticism will readily perceive, that this has been peculiarly the case in that province of theological inquiry which relates to the faith of the Jewish church. Works of the most dubious origin and authority, some the production of a period long subsequent to the dispersion of Israel; others, in the very opinion of those who adduce them, composed or interpolated by

Christian converts; others capable of an interpretation far more consonant to the systems of human philosophy than of evangelical truth<sup>q</sup>, have been urged as afford-

<sup>q</sup> The Targums which contain any admixture of mystical interpretation are not earlier than the latter part of the third century; the Gemara appears not to have been collected before the end of the fifth. The Midrashic books are of a very uncertain, and probably in many cases of very late period. The book Sohar (the chief of these) bears every appearance of having been (as even Schoetgen admits) written or interpolated by a Christian. The book Rabboth is not earlier than the third century: (see J. F. Mori *Hermeneutica N. T. Sect. de Usu Scriptorum Judaicorum*, who has some useful remarks on the application of Rabbinical literature to the criticism of the New Testament:) conf. Leusden, *Phil. Hebræo-mixtus*, Dissert. XII. et Jahn, *Appendix Hermeneutices*, p. 3. Accounts of the Jewish commentators, and characters of their several works, may be found in the *Bibliotheca Hebraica* of Wolfius, the *Horæ Talmudicæ* of Schoetgen, v. 2. and the *Historia Philosophiæ Hebraicæ* of Buddeus. The defect alluded to attaches, it is to be feared, to much of the pious labours of our own Allix, and to the otherwise admirable treatise *De Messia*, which forms the 2d vol. of the *Hor. Hebr. and Talmudicæ* of Schoetgen. Though we can scarcely assent to all that the latter claims for the “*usus operis*,” (*Præfat.* §. 21.) we readily admit, with him, that in the argument against the Jews both works are of the highest value. See also the well grounded remarks on the Cabbalistic Sephiroth in Laurence’s Preface to the *Book of Enoch*, p. xlv. note.



ing a fair and genuine representation of the accredited opinions of the ancient synagogue; and in the fabric thus arbitrarily and uncritically raised, its advocates here believed themselves to find a confirmation and illustration of those revealed mysteries, which of a truth are far better substantiated by a simple appeal to the obvious and unperverted sense of the scriptures of the new covenant<sup>r</sup>. In examining those Scriptures we find not only that our Lord and his followers themselves affix a secondary and more exalted sense to many passages of the Old Testament, but that they argue as though such a principle of interpretation were acknowledged as legitimate, were at best esteemed nothing un-

<sup>r</sup> Certainly not less objectionable on critical, and far more so on religious grounds, is the disposition shewn by later and more *philosophical* writers to represent these as sources from which the inspired writers borrowed. See Ammon, *Opusc. Theol.* p. 57. Some acute remarks on the critical value of the Talmudic and Midraschic remains are to be found in De Wette, *Comment. de morte J. C. expiatoria.* Berolini, 1813. pp. 35. et seq. They form however the only useful part of that laboured and fanciful production. The author, who appears to be *Professor publicus ordinarius* of theology in the university of Berlin, does not yield even to Bolingbroke or Voltaire in the *liberality* of his creed.

usual or unreasonable, by those whom they addressed. The prevalent belief indeed, that the Messiah should come, and that that Messiah was foreshewn by Moses and the prophets, of course involved (was, we may rather say, equivalent to, or identical with) the recognition of the general principle: the extent to which that principle was applied, and the degree of spiritual feeling and intelligence manifested in its application, must have varied with the religious state of those who acquiesced in it. These could not have been the same in the men whom our Lord accuses of having closed the door of knowledge, and hidden the key from his people, and in those who are commended as being Israelites without guile; in those who thought of the Saviour as one that should rival and destroy the earthly dominion of Cæsar, and those who looked to him as the Christ who knew and should teach them all things<sup>s</sup>.

<sup>s</sup> I would not urge, that even the more pious Israelites understood, any more than the apostles themselves, the full nature and spirituality of our Lord's kingdom. It is meant only to contend, what cannot I think be fairly questioned, that their piety would naturally lead to a

We have the evidence too of a writer contemporary, if not anterior to those of the New Testament, as to the attachment entertained for such mystical and spiritual interpretation of Scripture, by some, who, notwithstanding partial imperfections of theory and practice, ranked probably among the most instructed and pious of the Jewish communion. We learn that the details of that exposition, (admitting that is, as we fairly may, that the φύσις ἀποκεκρυμμένη of their eulogist includes more than we are accustomed to understand by the term natural philosophy :) we learn that the details of that exposition formed the chief objects of study and meditation to those remarkable classes of ascetics who are known to us, though but imperfectly, under the names of Essenians and Therapeutæ<sup>†</sup>. To these it may be necessary to refer hereafter; and for the present I would confine myself rather to the support which this

more spiritual view of the prophetic writings than the frivolous disputations and ceremonial formalities of the Pharisee, or the philosophic unbelief of the Sadducee.

<sup>†</sup> See the accounts given by Philo and Josephus.

practice undoubtedly received from those whom we believe to have spoken and written under the immediate and extraordinary influence of the Spirit which leadeth into all truth. It is almost needless to advert to the bare fact of its prevalence in all the apostolical remains, and in those most especially of St. Paul. The methods chiefly resorted to for the purpose of evading this authority (for there has existed in more than one quarter the desire and the attempt at such evasion) have been either the questioning and invalidating the belief which the church has in all ages held as to the inspiration of the writers, on the more subtle but scarcely less mischievous practice of extending to all such passages the principle, as it is usually termed, of *accommodation*<sup>u</sup>. The former of these opinions we are not at present called upon to examine: as to the latter, although even the most cautious and unquestionably pious expositors of Scripture have admitted that

<sup>u</sup> See Rosenmüller, Schol. in Ep. ad Hebræos, p. 134. and the quotation there adduced from Le Clerc. Semler, Appar. ad V. T. p. 358: ad N. T. p. 190.

some few passages of the Old Testament quoted or referred to in the New, must, in the present state of our knowledge, be regarded as so applied or accommodated to the description and illustration of subjects foreign to their original scope and intention<sup>x</sup>; yet it is surely unreasonable and uncritical to argue from these few to the whole, or even the larger portion of those sayings, which we are assured that holy men of old uttered, as the Spirit directed and enabled them.

Were these appeals to Moses and the Prophets made but rarely and indirectly and obscurely, did they occupy no more ample or prominent stations in the volume of the new covenant than the supposed allusions to the books of *Enoch*<sup>y</sup> and of the *burial of Moses*<sup>z</sup>, then indeed the Christian might be warranted in suspend-

<sup>x</sup> See Marckius, Comment. in De Moor, vol. i. p. 405. The lists however of passages said to be accommodated (c. g. that given in the valuable Introduction of Mr. T. H. Horne) might easily be much reduced, unless indeed we understand the word *accommodation* in a much wider sense than is desirable or critical.

<sup>y</sup> Jude 14.

<sup>z</sup> Jude 9.

ing at least his judgment as to their theological character and value. But frequently, directly, and confidently as they are adduced for the evident purposes of argument and of proof, nothing, one would think, short of actual and total scepticism could venture to insinuate, that they who so adduced them did not believe their prophetic and spiritual tenor, did in effect deliberately ground their own claims to acceptance upon a testimony, which derived its sole validity (if validity it could be termed) from the ignorance and credulity of those to whom they addressed themselves.

We should, I trust, be in every case backward to suspect, that writers professing themselves (under any form or establishment) members of the Church of Christ, did in reality conceal beneath that profession a total rejection and disbelief of all Christian truth, of all that offers itself as matter of supernatural and heavenly revelation. While therefore we would protest most strongly, in the name both of religion and of reason, against the specula-



tions which would thus reduce our Lord and his disciples to the rank of pretenders, arguing not for truth, but for victory, or at best of ignorant and mistaken guides, sharing largely in the imputed folly and fanaticism of their countrymen ; while we contend, that a disbelief in the spiritual and prophetic character of the Old Testament is upon no tenable grounds of argument or analogy to be reconciled with a belief in the divine origin and authority of the New ; we would yet hope, that the framers and supporters of these strange hypotheses are rather the inconsistent and inconsequential advocates, than the concealed enemies of that Gospel, the ministration of which they continue to exercise. We may grant somewhat to the influence of outward circumstances, somewhat more perhaps to the alleged, and, we hope, sincere desire of conciliating the open adversaries of our faith ; a conciliation however seldom effected, and certainly not worth the purchasing, by the sacrifice of nearly all that distinguishes the Gospel from the mere philosophical creed of the deist ; but where we are told, in a

voice purporting to be that of all the reasonable divines of protestant Europe, that every type, every prophecy, every adumbration of the Messiah's work and kingdom, to which we have been accustomed to look for the confirming our faith, and the invigorating our devotion, is to be at once and entirely discarded, as matter of nothing better than idle and Jewish superstition. Where we see this rejection of all spiritual interpretation coupled with an undisguised anxiety to divest even the historical records of Scripture of every thing exceeding human powers and attainments, we are assuredly tempted for the moment to inquire, Can these men be Christians<sup>a</sup>? When we consider the extent to which these vain

<sup>a</sup> “ Quæ” (all spiritual and mystical interpretation)  
 “ cum per se improbabilis et prorsus arbitraria sit merito  
 “ repudianda est.” *Bauer in Glass. Phil. Sacr.* vol. iv.  
 p. 29. The commentaries of the younger Rosenmüller  
 on the Psalms and on Isaiah will abundantly supply the  
 illustration of this modest and philosophical canon. See  
 especially the note \*\*\* Sch. in Ps. xvi. which leaves us  
 the choice of regarding our blessed Lord and his apo-  
 stles either as uninspired and ignorant of the meaning of  
 their own Scriptures, or as wilfully imposing on the peo-  
 ple an interpretation which they knew to be false.



imagination have infected many of our sister churches, we cannot but pray that we may ourselves be preserved from the contagion, and that He who of old planted the goodly vine of his truth, and made it to prosper among those who united in belief and profession with the venerable fathers of our own Zion, may yet raise and send forth into his vineyard labourers more earnestly devoted, and more spiritually qualified for its cultivation and protection.

In this reference to the mysteries of the elder covenant, none, we know, among the inspired teachers of the new, is more frequent or more powerful than the great apostle of the Gentiles. This characteristic (for peculiarity we cannot call it) of his style, it has been, with that class of theologians to whom we have been obliged so painfully to advert, customary to attribute chiefly to his previous education in the school of the Pharisees<sup>b</sup>. This assertion

<sup>b</sup> V. Baucris *Glass. Phil. Sacr.* vol. iv. p. 29; who, at p. 35. argues from the example of St. Paul, that the Pharisees were addicted to allegory. This would by less philosophical persons be esteemed reasoning in a circle.

(connected, I fear, in some instances with the wish to deny or depreciate the inspiration of the New Testament) has in all been made hastily, and, I cannot but think, erroneously.

From the documents yet existing as to the opinions and practices of that sect, from the known minuteness of their formal and literal observances, and from the general tenor of the reproaches which our Lord himself directs against them, we should rather, I conceive, be led to doubt as to the spirituality of their scriptural expositions<sup>c</sup>. They did indeed, probably in agreement with the whole body of their countrymen, expect a Messiah who should come as their temporal deliverer and sove-

<sup>c</sup> Such was decidedly the opinion of the learned Schoetgen. V. Messiam. (Præf. sectt. 9. et seq. and lib. i. pp. 34, 36.) J. G. Carpzov, who has diligently collected all that can throw light on the history and practices of this sect, (Annot. in Godwini Mosen et Aaronem, pp. 173. et seq.) has nothing which should lead us to regard them as the patrons of spiritual interpretation. J. B. Carpzov indeed is disposed to regard the well known allegorist Philo as having belonged to the school of the Pharisees; (Exercitt. in Ep. ad Hebræos, pp. 253, &c.) but his arguments are very unsatisfactory.

reign ; but as to the real character of the Redeemer and his kingdom, we see no reason to doubt that they were of those who, *when the law was read*, could not penetrate its typical obscurity, by reason of *the veil which was upon their hearts*<sup>d</sup>. Or if we admit even that the Pharisees did occasionally teach and practise some allegorical methods of interpretation, it is sufficiently evident that these bore not in their essential features any resemblance to those of the apostle. It was assuredly not in the schools of the Pharisees that he learned to accept *him whom they rejected*; to believe on a Messiah *whose kingdom was not of this world*; to know nothing but *Christ Jesus and him crucified*. Yet it is these very materials of his newly adopted faith, these things which were yet as a stumblingblock to the rulers of Israel, that he affirms to be contained in the mystical anticipations of the Lawgiver, the Psalmist, and the Prophets.

It might be urged too, that the more

<sup>d</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 15.

ancient of the Hebrew paraphrases and commentaries upon the Law (to which we must, I think, look for the closest illustration of the tenets of the Scribes and Pharisees, contemporary with the apostle) bear in truth no very prominent marks of a fondness for allegorical or spiritual interpretation. Such is not the character of the elder Targum; and in those portions even of the Mischna which relate to the *worship of the temple*<sup>e</sup>, to the *sacrifices*, and to *the day of expiation*<sup>f</sup>, we may search in vain for any thing more exalted than the frivolous and minute details of ceremonial observances. They form indeed (as does the whole work which contains them) an admirable comment upon the divine accusation, that the ecclesiastical rulers of the Jewish people *laid upon them burdens hard to be borne*; but they speak not, they savour not, of the office or spirit of him who vindicated his followers from this bondage into the liberty of the sons of God. If then the apostle learned the habit of in-

<sup>e</sup> Tamid.<sup>f</sup> Toma.

sisting upon the higher and spiritual sense of the things which were the shadow of better things to come, in any school save that of the Master who so miraculously called, and, as we contend, qualified him also for the understanding and ministration of his gospel, that praise, we are hardly, on any fair ground of criticism, justified in claiming for the school of the Pharisees. They might indeed, as has been admitted, have looked for a conquering Messiah, and believed him to be foretold by the Prophets; they might not, at least, have opposed themselves to the popular belief and hope on that subject; but the more extensive application of mystical exposition, under the form which it then wore, appears, so far as we have the means of judging, to have been the distinguishing character of another school, originating with, and perhaps confined to, the Jews of the dispersion. To this school our attention will be confined in the next lecture.

In tracing thus far the history of spiritual interpretation, we have seen that its practice is neither unscriptural nor unrea-

sonable. It cannot indeed be rejected, or reduced to the mere notion of accommodation, without questioning the inspiration, without rejecting the doctrinal and spiritual authority of the gospel; and it cannot be overlooked, without cutting off one of the living sources of Christian edification which the word of God offers to our use.

But let it be at the same time remembered, that the great and essential tenets of our faith do not rest upon, are not deduced from any portions of Scripture, to which even the adversary can except as being of ambiguous or uncertain import. They have their sure foundations in the simple narratives; in the repeated and unequivocal declarations of the New Covenant; in that history and those sayings of our blessed Lord and his immediate delegates, which, while they are amply sufficient of themselves to lead us into all truth, yet enable us by their reflected light to understand and to apply, neither erroneously, we trust, nor unprofitably, the darker oracles which preceded them.





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## LECTURE II.

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1 CORINTHIANS ii. 5.

*That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men.*

**H**AVING in the last Lecture surveyed the grounds for affixing a secondary and spiritual sense to many passages of the sacred writings which may be deduced from the internal character and evidence of those writings themselves, we may now proceed to trace the history of this method of interpretation, as it has been practised in various ages and with various degrees of success and plausibility. The ground which I attempt to traverse is of considerable extent, and occasionally not without its difficulty and obscurity. This will in part, I trust, plead my excuse, where the survey may appear to those better instructed than myself defective or erroneous. The method of treating the subject must of neces-



sity be rather historical than argumentative; but it shall (as I have already stated) be my object to draw from the narrative, wheresoever the opportunity fairly offers itself, such inferences as may be practically useful to the theological student.

It has already been incidentally remarked, that, long before the advent and preaching of our Lord, a part at least of the Jewish communion believed much of their Scriptures to contain, under the veil of the bare letter, a secondary and higher sense. In the present Lecture, I propose, so far as its limits will allow, to take a brief view of such documents, anterior to the age of the New Testament, as afford any illustration of this practice. It will be readily seen that these are chiefly, if not entirely, the product of one school; and that, a school rather of philosophy than of divinity, or sacred literature. Here then we are concerned only with the speculations of human ingenuity, borrowing its principle, indeed, of interpretation from the authority of revelation itself; but in its extension and application of that principle, though occasion-

ally presenting much that is pious and beautiful, yet too often devious, uncertain, and unsatisfactory.

The earliest instances of this practice are to be found (assuming, that is, the correctness of the dates usually assigned for the composition of those works) in the apocryphal books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus. These indeed might be regarded as furnishing a collateral evidence to the points contended for in the last Lecture, if we were authorized in considering them as representing the belief and traditions of the whole Jewish church during the period which elapsed between the termination and the fulfilment of the prophetic oracles. If, however, we acquiesce in the more probable opinion, that they originated with those Hellenizing Jews who mixed with the faith derived from a higher and purer source much of the learning and speculation of the Alexandrian schools; we can of course view them as expressing the tenets of that class only of scriptural expositors. In both these works, but more especially perhaps in the book of Wisdom, traces of

mystical interpretation are occasionally discoverable, though these are scarcely of that which can in strictness be termed a spiritual character. They are altogether in the tone of that Hellenistic philosophy, if we may so term it, which distinguishes the whole of the works in question, and of which it will soon be necessary to speak somewhat more at large. The most singular example, perhaps, of this mode of exposition to be found in either of the books is the assertion, that the sacerdotal vestments of Aaron were symbolical of the material, or perhaps of the archetypal, universe<sup>a</sup>; a notion held also by Josephus and others in later times. Both works present too distinct traces of the opinion that the Almighty executed his counsels in the government of the spiritual and physical creation through the intervention of his Word or Λόγος, and that this first begotten emanation of the Father was the Jehovah who appeared to and protected Israel. In one passage of the book of Wisdom, there is (if I be not mistaken) some-

<sup>a</sup> Wisdom of Solomon, xviii. 24.

what which implies that its author regarded the history of the fall of our first parents as allegorical<sup>b</sup>; and the same tendency to mystical exposition shews itself more than once in the highly amplified and ornamented detail which the same writer presents of the plagues inflicted on the monarch and people of Egypt<sup>c</sup>. Of an era not perhaps very remote from that of these extraordinary works, is a remarkable, though suspicious document, preserved by Eusebius, and attributed, on the authority of the Pseudo-Aristæas, to Eleazar the high priest. In this an allegorical explanation is authoritatively given to the different species of animals permitted or forbidden by the Mosaic law to be used for the food of man<sup>d</sup>. The chief ground for proposing this explanation appears to have been a dread lest the Scripture should be supposed to have prescribed any thing as of

<sup>b</sup> Ch. i. 14, 15, 16. See this notion admirably refuted by bishop Horsley, *Biblical Crit.* vol. i. p. 10.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. xvii. xviii. xix. Compare the general tone of these with that of the seventy-eighth Psalm.

<sup>d</sup> Eusebii *Præf. Evang.* lib. viii. cap. 9.

divine ordinance, without reason or truth, (*εἰκὴ ἢ μυθώδως*;) a pretext, which (with, perhaps, a yet greater latitude of application) is common to all the earlier advocates of allegorical exposition. It would assuredly have been well, if the ingenuity misplaced in developing these supposed mysteries had been exercised in the soberer task of inquiring, whether the precepts and incidents so readily accounted trivial and unimportant did not of a truth, from the place and connection which they held in the great and harmonious system of divine economy unfolded in the Scriptures, derive a value and a consequence, to which, when considered abstractedly, and without reference to that system, they seemed to prefer at the best a disputable claim. Whatever degree of credit we attach to the writings which pass under the name of Aristæas, the extracts preserved by Eusebius prove at least, that the habit of mystical exposition had already obtained among the Alexandrian Jews in the age of their author. The like inference may be drawn also from the extracts given by the same historian

from the treatise, whether genuine or supposititious, attributed to Aristobulus, a Jewish philosopher of the peripatetic school, said to have flourished under the Ptolemies<sup>e</sup>.

These earlier vestiges, however, of that spirit of refinement which sought for moral and philosophical truth under the narrative and even the preceptive parts of Scripture, though by no means without their value as historical documents, are yet, in point of interest as well as magnitude, far exceeded by the voluminous and comprehensive labours of the Alexandrian Philo. It is scarcely needful to state, that these consist of expository treatises upon various prominent subjects of the Mosaic history and institutions, and that nearly in the whole of these he follows to its widest extent the system of allegorical interpretation embraced by those whose remains we have just noticed. That his system is essentially the same with theirs, both as to the light in which he viewed the sacred writings, and the philosophy which he ap-

<sup>e</sup> Eusebii Præf. Evang. lib. vii. cap. 14.



plied to their illustration, we have every reason to conclude. He is indeed so far from speaking of this as any discovery of his own, that he more than once alludes to its being traditional; and in one place refers expressly to the *κανόνες τῆς ἀλληγορίας*<sup>f</sup>, as forming a standard of interpretation already established and understood by his readers. The principle which induced him to adopt the allegorical method he expressly states to be a conviction of the necessity for thus interpreting those portions of the inspired volume, which, to speculative and philosophical minds, might appear to contain any thing derogatory to the acknowledged nature and attributes of the Almighty.

The labours of Philo may conveniently, and with sufficient accuracy for our present purpose, be considered as directed chiefly to two objects. The illustration of theological truth, strictly so called, as it relates to the person, attributes, and imme-

<sup>f</sup> Περὶ Ὀνείρων. So, Ἦκουσα μέντοι καθέτεραν ἰδέαν. (De Josepho.) See also the traditional explanation of the characters of Abraham and Sarah, p. 213. and elsewhere.



diate operations of the Almighty, and the moral and intellectual culture of the human soul. Of that which at the present day would be termed spiritual exposition, his works exhibit but little<sup>g</sup>; still less do they display of the desire or attempt to be generally and popularly useful. Nor indeed was much of this latter tendency to be expected where the commentator wrote expressly for the initiated alone<sup>h</sup>; and where not only the practice of the moral virtues, but an acquaintance with the whole circle of human arts and sciences, was insisted upon as a previous discipline, (προπαιδευτική,) requisite to qualify the soul for that purely intellectual intercourse with its great source and author, which formed the beatific vision of his philosophy. The system of interpretation adopted for this purpose will be most readily explained by stating generally, that Philo regarded all the persons and things mentioned in Scrip-

<sup>g</sup> This was long since noticed by St. Ambrose; “Philo quoniam spiritualia Judaico non capiebat affectu intra moralia se tenuit.” De Paradiso, cap. iv.

<sup>h</sup> Μύσται κεκαθαρμένοι τὰ ὦτα. (De Cherubim.)

ture, whether as individuals, or in their relation or opposition to each other, under the characters of agent and patient, cause and effect, dominant and subordinate, good and bad, and the like, as the mystical designations of certain spiritual existences and metaphysical abstractions. Of these the chief are, 1. The Deity and his attributes. 2. The Divine Intellect or Word (*Λόγος*). 3. That Word either personified, or considered as having in truth a separate existence and agency. 4. The archetypal or ideal universe with all its parts, as contained in, and proceeding from, and set in order by, that Word. It will be readily understood, that neither our time nor our present object will admit of our pausing to enter into any discussion as to the real opinion entertained by Philo on those questions concerning the divine *Λόγος*, on which so high an interest has been conferred by the inspired declarations of St. John. The further objects of Philo's allegorical speculations are, 1. The human soul with all its powers and passions. 2 Pure intellect (*νοῦς*); and as opposed

or subordinate to pure intellect, sense, or the perception of sensible objects, αἰσθησις. 3. The virtuous or vicious qualities and tendencies of man. By such an adaptation of the letter to the establishment and illustration of abstract truth, Philo believed it to be the intention of Moses and the prophets to lead the mind from the earthly to the heavenly, from that which is seen to that which is unseen. The manner in which he essays to accomplish his purpose will be best exemplified by offering a simple abstract of his commentary, (if such it may be termed,) on the more important and leading portions of the inspired text.

In the very commencement of the Mosaic history, the philosophical genius of the Alexandrian finds, as might readily be anticipated, immediate and ample scope for indulging in the highest speculations of Platonism. The account of the creation given in the first section of the book of Genesis he refers, not to the production of the visible and sensible universe, but to that of its pattern and archetype, as existing in and emanating from the supreme

intellect<sup>h</sup>, “the seat of the incorporeal essences of the natural elements.” In the *man made after the image of God*, he sees the divine Λόγος considered as having a separate and personal existence, or, as he interprets it, “a purely ideal and generic exemplar of Deity, to be apprehended by the intellect alone, incorporeal, neither male nor female, an indestructible nature<sup>i</sup>.” The seventh day, on which all is said to have been completed, and its great Author to have rested from his operations, he considers as indicating nothing more than the absolute perfection of the whole; grounding his opinion on the mystical properties which the Pythagorean school is well known to have attached to certain numbers.

Having proceeded thus far on the mystical principles of his own sect, it might be expected that Philo would acquiesce in the plain historical meaning of that which follows: but here he pursues the same allegorical course, still enlarging the range of

<sup>h</sup> Lib. i. sub initio.  
Hoeschelii.

<sup>i</sup> P. 23. Conf. p. 172. ed.

his objects, and permitting a yet greater licence to his imagination. In the “face” of the material earth he finds the type of sense; in the “herb and plants of the field,” whatsoever is the object of sense (τὸ αἰσθητὸν,) and in the “man who was yet “wanting to till the ground,” and the mist which rose up on its surface, the symbol of intellect<sup>k</sup>. The same intellect is the mystical counterpart of Adam<sup>l</sup>, while sense is that of his consort Eve. The creation of the former could hardly be doubted or explained away: that of the latter, in the literal sense of the Mosaic record, he rejects<sup>m</sup>, (μυθῶδες ἐστίν.) In respect to the history of the fall, he holds language which renders it doubtful whether he regarded it as an historical or allegorical expression of the truth. It is not (he contends) made up of fabulous matter, (οὐ πλάσματα μύθων,) but of types calling for an allegorical interpretation. Paradise therefore he affirms

<sup>k</sup> Lib. i. p. 34.

<sup>l</sup> Elsewhere (Q. R. D. H. p. 381.) he considers Adam as γήινος νοῦς.

<sup>m</sup> Ἀλλ. Νόμου. lib. iii. This is noticed by Photius.

to have been, not a garden of earthly and material sweets, but a spiritual region, filled and adorned with produce of a purely intellectual nature. The tree of life shadows out the perfection of all holiness and virtue, and him in whom that perfection is eternally inherent, the Word of God<sup>n</sup>. The tree of knowledge (as its name imports) is that power of the mind which decides upon the similar or dissimilar nature of things, (*φρόνησις μέση τὰ ἐναντία φύσει διακρίνουσα.*) The four rivers of Eden are the four cardinal virtues; and even the circumstances of their position and direction are allegorized with a view to that interpretation. The serpent is the gratification of the senses, (*ἡδονή*;) and the nakedness of our first parents is spiritual<sup>o</sup>. The circumstances attendant on the expulsion from Paradise are treated with a yet greater latitude of fancy. The cherubim which guarded its entrance are, he tells us, according to some, the spheres of the fixed

<sup>n</sup> P. 172.

<sup>o</sup> Ἄλλ. Νόμου. l. iii. he explains the various ways in which νοῦς ἐστὶ γυμνός.



and erratic stars, which form as it were a barrier between the soul and that heavenly and intellectual paradise from which she is exiled: the fiery sword, that energy which produces and regulates their movements, (the *κίνησις* of the Greek philosophy.) But his own mind, he boasts, indulging in a conjecture akin to prophecy, prompts him to see in the former the divine power and benevolence, in the latter, the eternal Word of God<sup>p</sup>: an exposition which, like many others of Philo, and of the Midraschic school, has been misapplied by the pious ingenuity of those who have sought in the remains of Jewish learning for the confirmation and illustration of that which is revealed in the New Testament, as to the nature and union of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit<sup>q</sup>. In examining the characters of the first-born Cain, and his unoffending victim, he takes a somewhat different ground. Cain is the type of the contentious and unholy sophist; Abel of

<sup>p</sup> De Cherubim.

<sup>q</sup> See Scott's Christian Life, vol. iii. Note on p. 51. lib. 2.



the contemplative and pious mind, referring every thing to the power and wisdom of its Creator: a character which Philo describes with a truth and beauty as highly creditable to his religious feeling, as to his powers of language and imagination<sup>r</sup>: the field in which they walked is that of discussion or controversy. Here however he does not appear to question the literal purport of the history. In the case of Enoch, on the contrary, he regards what is said concerning the translation of that patriarch as descriptive of the conversion of the soul to God and better things by repentance; a laxity of interpretation which his readers may almost be tempted to overlook, in consideration of the beauty and eloquence with which he describes and contrasts the state of man before and after that important change of the heart and affections<sup>s</sup>. The history of Noah, though its general truth is neither directly nor indi-

<sup>r</sup> P. 264. (De Conf. Ling.)

<sup>s</sup> P. 276. The passage may not impossibly have suggested to Hooker the yet more beautiful and eloquent contrast in his first sermon on St. Jude, sect. 14.

rectly questioned <sup>t</sup>, yet furnishes an ulterior lesson of philosophy. When we are told that that patriarch was the tenth from Adam, we are to look, not so much to the genealogical fact as to the perfection of character typified by that perfect number. The increase of his family, and at the same time of all flesh, teaches that the moral contraries virtue and vice always coexist, but that in the present condition of human affairs the preponderance is unhappily on the side of the latter <sup>u</sup>. In the ark we see the material frame of man <sup>x</sup>: in the animals which it enclosed, the passions and evil affections which inhabit that frame. The flood itself is the tempestuous and ever-flowing state of man's existence upon earth. The egress from the ark is the ultimate delivery of the imprisoned mind into a state of spiritual and intellectual freedom <sup>y</sup>. Thus Philo discovers in the brief history of the antediluvian patriarchs all that he had learnt from the traditions of his countrymen, and the theories of the

<sup>t</sup> Vid. p. 512.    <sup>u</sup> Περὶ Γενέων.    <sup>x</sup> P. 172.    <sup>y</sup> P. 262.

eclectic school, as to the constitution and moral government of the universe and its rational inhabitants. Nor in those later periods, where the history becomes more detailed and circumstantial, is he at any time content to rest in the bare letter. To such an extent does he carry these speculations, that if we admit him not to have lost sight of his own first principle<sup>z</sup>, we must suppose him also to have believed that the only object worthy the divine interference, was the leading pious and exalted intellects to a knowledge of the philosophical and moral tenets of his own peculiar sect. Thus while he allows that the history of Abraham exhibits in its literal acceptation the example of a man wise and dear to his Creator, he sees in the outward circumstances of that history the progress of the human mind from a state of darkness and error to one of intellectual and spiritual illumination. Chaldea is the region of vain and earthly imaginations, of astrology, idolatry, and false philosophy.

<sup>z</sup> See page 46.

Haran is the type of the sensible and material universe, of the creature with whose elements alone the unenlightened man is conversant. The handmaid Agar shadows out that discipline of the mind in the study of the liberal arts and sciences which is a prerequisite for the attainment of the highest and only true wisdom. She is termed an Egyptian, because the body (of which Egypt is the symbol) is needful for the acquisition of this elementary knowledge; and, lastly, she is subordinate to, and in time to be supplanted by, the real and legitimate partner of such a mind, the perception of things purely intellectual, and of their eternal author, figured in the person of Sarah, whose name he interprets to signify, my superior or ruling principle, (*ἀρχή μου*.)<sup>a</sup> In Isaac, Philo discerns the type of a mind ranking yet more highly in the scale of spiritual and intellectual excellence; a mind possessing intuitively, as it were, and by the immediate gift of its author, the supreme wisdom; not a deni-

<sup>a</sup> Περὶ Συνόδου, p. 282. et seq.

zen of the fleshly Egypt, not seeking for previous instruction from the handmaid and the slave, from human erudition and accomplishments, but choosing one virgin partner, the heavenly and spiritual Rebecca, a patient continuance in the truth, (ὕπομονήν.) In like manner the wives of the other patriarchs are declared to be severally typical of some good quality of the heart or understanding<sup>b</sup>. The life of the patriarch Jacob, like that of Abraham, is regarded as symbolical of the progress of human intellect from the earthly and visible things to the heavenly and invisible. The well of Haran is the fountain of science. To the vision of the ascending and descending angels a yet more remarkable interpretation is affixed<sup>c</sup>. The ladder

<sup>b</sup> P. 88. Λόγω μὲν εἰσι γυναῖκες ἔργω δ' ἀρεταί. So elsewhere, Οὐ περὶ γυναικῶν λόγος, ἀλλὰ διανοίων. Περὶ Συνόδου.

<sup>c</sup> P. 455. Περὶ Ὀνείρων. This, according to Manasseh Ben Israel, the most learned (in the opinion of Boyle on Scripture, p. 90, ed. 1671.) of all the modern rabbins, has been in all ages the opinion of Jewish divines. See M. B. I. De Creatione, p. 62. et De Res. Mort. pp. 215 et 327. Both these works are among the most interesting and authentic depositories of Jewish traditions and philosophy.

is the region of the air interposed between our own globe and the lunar sphere ; a region peopled through all its extent by intellectual and incorporeal essences, some of whom are continually descending for the purpose of animating the bodies of men ; others, having quitted those bodies, are returning to their aerial mansion, destined either to make this their sole and endless dwelling-place, or to return to the prison of the body, according to their respective degrees of purity and advancement in the love and knowledge of spiritual things. It is needless to add, that this is precisely the doctrine of the Platonic school as to the preexistence and descent of the human soul.

On the history of Joseph <sup>d</sup>, Philo evidently dwells with the patriotic feeling of an Hebrew, endeavouring to recommend the memory of his illustrious forefather to the country which had once so powerfully felt the benefit of his rule. Independently of the natural interest which in all ages

<sup>d</sup> See the whole section dedicated to this subject.



and all states of society this most beautiful and affecting of narratives must possess, the courtly and cultivated Alexandrians, and the author who wrote for them, were doubtless more to be captivated by the character of the prince and statesmen of Egypt, than by that of the simpler race, whose sole wealth consisted in the produce of the flock or the tillage of the soil. All its circumstances therefore are detailed and amplified in a manner designedly, I think, adopted for the purpose of attracting and conciliating those who were familiar with the *Κύρου παιδεία* of the philosophical Athenian. Yet here, worthy, even in his own view of worth, as the literal history evidently appeared, Philo cannot abstain from allegory. It has, he declares, in common with nearly the whole of the Pentateuch, an ulterior and recondite meaning. Joseph is the political, as opposed to the natural life, (the *βίος κατὰ φύσιν* :) the coloured vest is the versatility and address requisite for the politician, (*πολυτροπία τοῦ πολιτικοῦ*.) He is truly said to be sold to a many-headed master, the populace, or rather the whole



body politic. Joseph we are told interpreted dreams; the statesman is called upon to do the same; but his art is not that of the sophists and impostors of the *ἀγορά*. It is his higher province to interpret the great waking dream of life, for what is life but a dream. The life of Moses, affording a splendid picture of the achievements and institutes of one expressly commissioned by Jehovah to guide and legislate for the people of his choice, is, probably with the same view as that of Joseph, treated with as strict or a yet stricter adherence to its historical import. In surveying the moral portions of the law, he rarely deviates into his favourite mysticism; and his expositions are usually pertinent, and at times clothed in language of much beauty and energy. In those ceremonial institutions which our Lord and his apostles have taught us also to regard as symbolical of a dispensation yet higher and holier, he uniformly discovers the types of his own philosophical creed, as to the order and government of the material and intellectual universe, and the agency of that divine

Word which upholds and regulates all things. Of this latter, the chief adumbrations are found in the person of the high-priest<sup>e</sup>, and in the ephod which formed so conspicuous a part of his sacred vestments. And here Philo undoubtedly uses in more than one place expressions which should seem to indicate, that he had attained to some notion (though but an obscure and imperfect one) of that mediatorial office of the eternal Son of God, which forms the belief and the consolation of those who have learned and received him as he is. It must however be admitted, that the Christian application (if it may be so called) of these passages is not so unquestionable or free from difficulty as it might at first sight appear to be<sup>f</sup>. But this question is not

<sup>e</sup> P. 362. The golden plate of the frontlet is, according to Philo, a type of the archetypal, the bells and pomegranates, of the material universe. The tabernacle is again a type of the same, and its measurements are grounded on the mystic properties of numbers. The candlestick, tables, and other ornaments, are referred to the parts and phenomena of the sensible world.

<sup>f</sup> On this point the well known work of the venerable J. Bryant cannot, I think, be implicitly depended upon. A more correct general view of Philo's opinion will be

necessarily connected with our immediate design, and its discussion would far exceed the limits to which I must at present confine myself. It may be sufficient briefly to state, that Philo regarded the character and offices of the divine Λόγος as altogether distinct and different from those of the Messiah, to whom, with the mass of his countrymen, he looked as an earthly and temporal deliverer; a circumstance which of itself throws much doubt on the hypothesis of those who suspect him to have been partly, at least, indebted for his knowledge of divine truth, and his method of interpreting the Mosaic records, to the preaching of our blessed Lord or his immediate followers.

On this point however, and upon many found in the admirable treatise “On the Trinity of Plato, &c.” by the Rev. C. Morgan. London 1795. From this learned and acute writer, I can differ only as to the personality of the Λόγος, a doctrine which I cannot but think that Philo certainly held. See Keil, *Opuscula*, (Lipsiæ, 1821.) p. 514, who appears to have examined this subject with great care. The view, however, taken by Lohdus, in his ingenious but sometimes fanciful tract, *De Vestigiis Rel. Christ. in Philone*, Lipsiæ 1774, coincides with that of Mr. Morgan.

of those analogies which have been thought to exist between the opinions of Philo and those of the Christian church, there is yet ample field for the research of the pious and studious inquirer. Was Philo's equivocal use of the term itself (Λόγος) intentional or merely inaccurate? Did he in some passages understand his own expressions to imply strict personality, or did he use them only in a strain of highly figurative prosopopœia? Did he derive his notions on this subject from the Platonic school alone, or was there some more ancient and mysterious source whence both Plato and himself might derive the groundwork of those doctrines, which the hand of the beloved disciple corrected, amplified, and affixed to him in whom only they could be realized? Did these opinions originate in a traditionary corruption of the patriarchal faith, or were they produced by the tendency which the human mind (conscious of its own inability to see and comprehend the Almighty in his proper essence and character) may have felt for the interposition of some more intel-

ligible existence; some <sup>§</sup> μεθορίου καὶ μεσιτεύον-  
τος between itself and Him who inhabiteth  
eternity. Lastly, can it be probable (as  
some have conjectured) that those passages  
of this remarkable work which afford the  
strongest points of resemblance to the apo-  
stolical remains, should in every case have  
been inserted, or altered at least, and ac-  
commodated to the Christian scheme at a  
subsequent period? These (and the num-  
ber might easily be enlarged) are questions  
which can hardly be without their share of  
interest for the theological student, for  
him at least who is anxious to acquaint  
himself with all that may illustrate the hi-  
story and the tenets of the faith which he  
has received. He needs only to be cau-  
tioned, (and examples are not wanting to  
prove that such caution is requisite,) he  
needs only to be cautioned, that these spe-  
culations of human ingenuity are not to be  
received and valued as adding any thing

§ Q. R. D. H. Lohdus seems to feel the difficulty of  
reconciling this epithet to the Λόγος considered merely as  
an attribute. p. 28.

to, still less as explaining that which is revealed in the word of God. The inspired writers are to be regarded, not as borrowing and imitating, but as correcting the errors and supplying the deficiencies of their less favoured predecessors and contemporaries. To illustrate this briefly, and from the case under our immediate consideration: were the student to accept the labours of Philo and those who most closely resemble him, as an authoritative exposition of the views which pervade the Gospel of St. John and the Epistle to the Hebrews, he might in all probability be led into the error of those who have denied the proper divinity of our Lord, and the existence and personality of the Holy Spirit; while he who looks upon the uninspired writers as merely the advocates of human opinions, or at best the occasional depositaries of tradition, obscurely and imperfectly understood; and who seeks for the corrective of those opinions, and the real import of those traditions from the higher and purer source of inspiration on-



ly; can scarcely be tempted so to misunderstand and pervert the faith delivered to the saints.

It has been felt necessary for more than one reason to dwell thus long upon the general character of the system adopted by the Alexandrian expositor for the interpretation and illustration of the sacred volume chiefly, because it appears nearly unquestionable that his works present the earliest, fullest, and most faithful document to which we have at present access of the opinions entertained, and the modes of exposition practised, by the philosophical Hebrews of his own time. It may be affirmed indeed, and the opinion will not I believe be found to differ very essentially from that of the most learned biblical critics of later times, that the mystical and theosophical remains of the Talmudical and the Midraschic<sup>g</sup> authors (to say nothing of the obscurity and doubtfulness of

<sup>g</sup> Accounts of the Midraschim, or allegorical expositions of the later Jewish writers, may be found in the *Philosophia Hebraica* of Buddeus, the *Bibliothecæ* of Buxtorf and Wolfius, and the *Horæ Hebr.* of Schoetgen.



their age and origin) do in fact contain little or nothing of real importance which is not to be met with far better and more intelligibly expressed in the commentary of Philo<sup>b</sup>. Neither is it less certain, that the example and opinions of this eloquent and pious philosopher influenced the theory and practice of those Christian expositors who succeeded him to an extent by no means generally understood or appreciated<sup>i</sup>: that his fundamental tenets are in fact to be traced with some additions and some occasional modifications, (often rather apparent than real,) through a long descent of mystic authors to a period almost within our own memory. The visionary imaginations (as we not unjustly regard them) which in later days so fascinated and engrossed the powerful mind of him to whom the Christian church owed the "Serious Call," and the refutation of

<sup>b</sup> See Jahn, *Hermen.* p. 159, et App. *Hermen.* vol. i. p. 3. There are also some judicious remarks on the critical value and use of Philo in the *Hermeneutica* of Morus, vol. ii. pp. 179 and 209.

<sup>i</sup> Photius has noticed this with his usual discrimination, *Bibl. C.* 105.

the errors of Hoadly and the paradoxes of Mandeville, were in all their essential and characteristic features nothing more than the philosophical reveries of the Jewish Platonist<sup>k</sup>.

It has already been stated, that the disposition for allegorizing every part of the ancient history and legal institutes of the chosen people prevailed equally in those societies of contemplative men, whose ascetic habits are described both by Philo and by his countryman Josephus, and who (as we are expressly told by the former) held, that the letter of Scripture was as the material and outward body of man, while the latent allegory was as the spirit which animated and gave value to its frame<sup>l</sup>; an

<sup>k</sup> See Law's Spirit of Love and Spirit of Prayer. The same fundamental theory may be traced in the extravagant and frequently unintelligible work of the well known J. Behmen, (*Mysterium Magnum*,) from which Law professes to have derived his materials. It is most singular that so learned a writer should have given Behmen credit for the *originality* of his reveries. A synopsis of the doctrines which Law received through this channel will be found appended to Tighe's Short Account of his Life. London. Hatchard. 1813.

<sup>l</sup> De Vit. Contempl. et Therapeutis.

opinion, it may here be noticed, entertained also by Josephus himself, who, though agreeably to the character of his great work, he treats the early records of his nation as matter chiefly of historical truth, yet clearly expresses his acquiescence in, and his intention even of writing more fully and exclusively upon, their mystical interpretation<sup>1</sup>. Neither should it perhaps be unmentioned, that in those schools, whence the Hellenistic Jews derived the greater part of that philosophical creed which they ingrafted on the faith of their ancestors, it was already the custom of ingenious and speculative men to employ their talents in allegorizing, in no very dissimilar manner, the varied and incoherent fictions of heathen mythology<sup>m</sup>. That Philo was influenced, or at least felt himself countenanced by this example, seems highly probable. In the same quar-

<sup>1</sup> Antiq. Jud. Προοίμιον, sub fine.

<sup>m</sup> See the stoical expositions of this character in Cicero De N. D. Such works as enter much into the detail of these allegories, such at least as are preserved to us, are of a date posterior to Philo.

ter, possibly, he might have found authority for the laxity and inconsistency at times so glaringly conspicuous in his expositions<sup>n</sup>.

And this brings us finally to the consideration of that which was in truth the radical defect in Philo's principles of interpretation, in his whole view indeed of religious truth, a consideration the more needful, as the same form of error still not unfrequently possesses and exercises the same attraction on the minds of ingenious and learned individuals, of those especially who have been accustomed to attach a paramount importance to the study of some specific

<sup>n</sup> This will be evident to any one perusing continuously any section of his Commentaries. To give a single instance: in that on dreams, the sun is interpreted to mean, 1. the Deity; 2. intellect; 3. sense, (αἴσθησις.) In general too, so desultory and excursive is his manner of writing, as to occasion much of fatigue and dissatisfaction to the student. Yet Pere Lamy, in the true spirit of his communion, ventures to insist upon the example of Philo as proving that arguments grounded on the *sensus mysticus* are legitimate and "of force;" that sense itself he would have determined by the traditions of the church. *Apparatus Biblicus*, Bundy's translation, pp. 358 et 360.

branch of abstract or physical science, and that too possessing in many cases perhaps a temporary only, or a local popularity.

Philo bent his own intellect, and would fain have bent the revealed word of God also, to an unjustifiable conformity with the social and philosophical prejudices of his age and country ; or such, it would perhaps be more strictly accurate to say, was the character of the system which Philo embraced, and recommended by the exercise of talents and acquirements certainly of no common order. The heathen philosopher contended that *his* school alone was in possession of the great and universal truths of physical and theological science. He explained away his national mythology into mere symbolical representations of the attributes and operations of the Supreme Mind, or the phenomena of the material universe. In total ignorance of the real character and economy of the Mosaic dispensation, he regarded its details as unworthy the dignity of that Being from whose will they emanated, a Being of whose power and benevolence he had at best but obscure and im-

perfect notions. The Hebrew, separated from a country which had no more a name among the kingdoms of the earth, accustomed to bow to the authority, and anxious to conciliate the favour of a people so long his masters, was but too naturally led to acquiesce in their notions of philosophical and religious truth, as well as in many of their outward habits of life and conduct. He conceded all, or nearly all, that his heathen fellow-students could demand, and did virtually and in effect, if not in terms, consent to invest the Athenian sage with the authority due only to the inspired law-giver°. A compliance similar in its nature and effects has in after-times but too frequently and too deeply sullied the purity and diminished the usefulness of various branches of the Christian church. In our own age and country we have not been without examples of the same defection from the humility and simplicity of the

° Traces of this tendency are constantly observable in perusing his works. Thus in one place he asserts the *δαίμονες* of the Greeks to be the same with the angels of his countrymen; in another he states that Greek philosophers were employed to assist in the education of Moses.



believer's wisdom ; and in that continental school which was alluded to in our last Lecture, the like compromise of Christian faith and principle at the shrine of the uncertain and fluctuating theories of human philosophy has been mainly instrumental in reducing the profession of Christianity to a state, in which it is scarcely deemed of consequence sufficient to excite the distaste or opposition even of those who totally and avowedly disbelieve and disown it<sup>p</sup>. This

<sup>p</sup> See the language held on the present accordance of divines and philosophers in the *Histoire de la Philosophie moderne* of Buble. On this point I am much gratified to find my own feelings in unison with the expressed opinions of a much weightier and more competent authority, the learned editor of the *Reliquiæ Saceræ*. “ *Exteros quosdam nil moror, qui libertatem*  
 “ *quidvis sentiendi ac dicendi quo majorem sibi suisque*  
 “ *comparent, unitatem cum ecclesiæ tum doctrinæ labe-*  
 “ *factant et convellunt, re utique neglecta atque derisa,*  
 “ *quæ usque ab evangelii ortu magni facta est, et sine*  
 “ *qua periclitetur necesse est Christiana fides. Isti ni-*  
 “ *mirum per causam lætioris cursus atque successus ve-*  
 “ *ritatis, non solum antiquos patres, et veterum Chris-*  
 “ *tianorum religionem, parvi faciunt, verum etiam post-*  
 “ *habitis Sacris Scripturis, quas quidem ipsas incertæ*  
 “ *volunt esse originis, regulam fidei iis inesse denegant ;*  
 “ *et, si præcepta excipias moralia, iisdem haud necesse*  
 “ *esse ut credatur, temere prorsus statuunt. An isti*



dereliction of Christian truth, and (in speaking of those who yet call themselves by the name of the Redeemer) it may not unfairly be added, of Christian duty, has been there, and may be elsewhere, gradual, and to incautious minds nearly imperceptible in its fatal progress; and the student cannot therefore be too early or seriously warned against so unauthorized, uncandid, and, I will venture to add, so irrational a view of the oracles of divine truth. He cannot bear it too strongly in memory, that when the simple and unequivocal sense of those oracles has been attained to by the diligent and sober use of the best and most legitimate means of interpretation, by the

“sunt ex animo Christiani, haud quæro; ita esse quam-  
 “obrem debeant, ex principiis scilicet, quæ ipsi sibi  
 “posuerint, idoneam satis causam reperire non possum.  
 “Stent enim oportet auctoritate fontium divinorum no-  
 “stræ religionis, quicumque veritatem ejus diligenter ac  
 “serio investigatam se amplecti profiteantur; nisi forte  
 “omnia sus deque habere velint, et fundamenta sanctæ  
 “disciplinæ callide et veteratorie subvertere.” *R.S. Præf.*  
 p. xii. An able and judicious censure of the same school  
 will be found in Laurence’s Sermon on Excess in Philo-  
 logical Speculation, and in Dr. Blomfield’s learned Dis-  
 sertation on the Traditions relative to the Messiah.

comparison of Scripture with Scripture, and by a pious regard to the great scope and object of the whole ; it is then the Christian's duty to acquiesce in that sense as the express communication of him who knoweth all things, and has the right of demanding in all the credence and submission of those to whom he speaketh. And he who thus receives the truth with singleness of heart and earnest prayer for that Spirit which alone can effectually teach and preserve us in it, he shall indeed be made wise, not perhaps according to man's wisdom, but wise unto present holiness, wise unto eternal salvation.

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## LECTURE III.

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1 CORINTHIANS ii. 5.

*That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men.*

IN the two former Lectures it was endeavoured to shew, that there were reasonable and scriptural grounds for attaching a secondary and spiritual sense to much of the Law and the Prophets; and that such was, so far as we have the opportunity of ascertaining matters of this nature, the opinion, if not of the whole Jewish church, yet certainly of many among its most learned and pious members. That the practice of such interpretation was carried by some to an unwarrantable excess, affords no proof that it was not originally founded upon just conceptions of the character of the older revelation, or that it is repugnant to the wise and benevolent intentions of Him by whom all Scripture was given, and to *whom*

*were known all his works from the beginning.* The course of our inquiry has now brought us to that period, at which the preaching of a new and more perfect dispensation was committed by its divine Author to the apostles and ministers of his choice; committed with the express assurance, and confirmed and sanctioned by the conscious and sensible presence of his informing Spirit. If we believe them to have spoken and written under the guidance of that Spirit, to have been *led* (as it was promised) *into all truth*; if we hold upon any theory the proper inspiration of that which they delivered; I do not see with what consistency we can refuse (as some would do) to acquiesce in their interpretation of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. That to these Scriptures they do affix a secondary and spiritual meaning, and that they refer to them with this view, not merely in a few partial and dubious instances, but repeatedly, and with a distinctness to be questioned only by the most determined prejudice, seems equally clear. If indeed with one school we are to deny the exist-

ence of all types and prefigurations of the Messiah and his kingdom, and to contend that where the Law is said to have had the shadow of the good things to come, no more is meant than that in comparison with the gospel it was as valueless as a shadow when compared to a substance<sup>a</sup>; we would answer, that such a theory claims for plain and specific language a much greater laxity and licence of interpretation than any which it objects to. If with others<sup>b</sup> we attempt to resolve the whole into one system of accommodation, we certainly do not a little shake the credibility of those witnesses who could rest so much upon so sandy a foundation. But the writers of the New Testament in no place appear either to confess or to suspect that the secondary or allegorical sense, which they attach to the Law and the Prophets, are thus arbitrary and unreal. That we

<sup>a</sup> This is the hypothesis of Sykes in his answer to Collins.

<sup>b</sup> See the first Lecture, p. 27. This hypothesis the theologians of modern Germany have derived chiefly from the school of Le Clerc.

are content to regard some few instances of obscure application as thus accommodated, (and the lists usually given of such accommodations might indeed be much reduced,) does not, any more than the exceptions in various other cases, invalidate the general rule.

And here I would venture even to submit, whether, as we consent, both from their own internal evidence, and from the acknowledged inspiration of those who adduce them, to receive the great bulk of the scriptural quotations so adduced in the New Testament as truly and originally typical and prophetical, it may not be the part of Christian humility and sober criticism rather to suspend the judgment as to those few which present real difficulties, than to attempt the accounting for or reconciling them by any hypothesis of accommodation, or partial and individual application; by conceding that they are no more than ornaments of diction, or at best *argumenta ad hominem*.

Upon the whole then it must be granted, that the writers of the New Testament did

regard the Old as exhibiting in many of its leading features a real and intentional adumbration of those foreknown counsels of God, which were to receive their completion in the gift of a Saviour and the preaching of his Gospel. And this is all with which we are at present concerned; for our time would not permit, nor indeed does it come within the scope of the present Lectures, to examine even cursorily into the import and bearings of every passage thus adduced from the Old Testament by the evangelists and apostles: but it may be useful briefly to call to mind that they are uniformly adduced with reference either to the personal history and mediatorial office of our blessed Redeemer, to the spiritual character of the kingdom which he established upon earth, or to the future destiny of his universal church; and that with respect to the latter they are rather applied to its great and general outlines than to any minuter circumstances of detail; a point in which the expositors of after-times but too often and too unwisely deviated from their example.



It cannot, lastly, be denied or questioned, that even in the records of the new covenant, the things which concern the renewal of the inner man, and the salvation of the believer, are in more than one case shadowed out to us under types and analogies, which, if we accept the testimony of those records, we are not only authorized but bound to understand and to apply spiritually. To pass over much of that part of our Lord's teaching which was confessedly *in parables*; if we allow that there be any spiritual grace connected with the right usage and reception of the Christian sacraments, we must admit their outward elements to be the certain and preordained symbols of that grace, and of the means whereby it is conveyed to us: we must (be it spoken with reverence and faith) admit the material body and blood of our glorious Redeemer himself to be typical of that spiritual food whereby the inward life of the believer's soul, that life which, as we are expressly told, *is hidden with Christ in God*, is produced and supported. When the apostle urges, (in which our church

has well and wisely followed him,) that as our Saviour died and rose again for us, so should we who are buried with him in baptism die unto sin and rise again unto righteousness: when he expressly exhorts the believers as *those who are risen with Christ*, we cannot deny that he sees in the history of thus much at least of his Master's life a spiritual as well as a literal import. The luxuriance of human ingenuity may indeed, as it has often done, push its imitation of these mysterious analogies much too far; the pride of scepticism may refuse to be taught at all after this manner, and its votary may question the inspiration of those Scriptures which would thus teach him: but neither the abuses of the one nor the perverseness of the other can invalidate the truth of the general position, that the New Testament does not only assert the secondary and spiritual meaning of much that is contained in the Old, but authorizes and strengthens the legitimacy of such interpretation by affixing the like to portions also of its own contents.

It were pleasing, did our immediate ob-

ject permit it, to delay yet somewhat longer in these regions of inspiration and of certainty; for we pass on to those in which the infirmity of human reason, and at times even the influence of human passions and prejudices, will be found intermingling themselves with the pure and infallible dictates of the revealed word.

Of the age immediately succeeding the promulgation of the Gospel, so little (so little at least which can be regarded as free from all suspicion of forgery or interpolation) is preserved to us, that we are scarcely competent to judge how far those holy men, to whom the superintendence and teaching of the earliest churches was intrusted, felt themselves authorized to imitate, in the spiritual interpretation of Scripture, the example of their great instructor. In their public ministrations and exertions for the setting forth and recommending to those without the faith delivered to them, they relied in all probability rather on the earnest and authoritative enunciation and application of those great Christian truths, which are at no time the less

important because they are simple and elementary. They spoke of death and judgment, of conversion from sin, and belief in the divine power and atoning blood of the Son of the living God: but, excepting in their actual discussions with the Hebrew, or in the researches of those few more informed and advanced believers who employed themselves on the detailed research of Scriptural truth<sup>c</sup>, we can scarcely suppose that much would be found of this species of interpretation, or any thing indeed added to that which was already so copiously afforded by the apostles.

Next to the inspired volume of the new covenant, the most ancient Christian remains which we possess are doubtless those which are well known under the title of the Apostolical Fathers. Whether or no

<sup>c</sup> To these studies the term *γνώσις* seems to have applied from the earliest times; and such persons of undisciplined minds and vivid imaginations as substituted for or engrafted upon the simple and scriptural tenets of the church their own speculations and hypotheses, probably carried with them, on separating, the name (*γνωστικοί*) which they had already assumed, or been distinguished by, among the faithful.

these can be satisfactorily proved to have been written in all cases by those whose names they bear, it does not concern us for our present purpose to inquire; since it will be conceded (upon any hypothesis of their real origin) that they afford competent evidence as to the methods of scriptural interpretation prevalent at least as early as the middle of the second century. The only traces of allegorical or spiritual exposition which I have observed in these venerable documents, are to be found in the former epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians; (a composition which even the most sceptical of ecclesiastical historians<sup>c</sup> does not venture actually to reject as a forgery;) and in that attributed perhaps with somewhat less of certainty to St. Barnabas. In the former, these expositions occur incidentally and rarely, and are made (as might be expected) to bear chiefly on the objects of the Christian's faith. In regarding Israel as a type of the Messiah's church,<sup>d</sup> and in his application of the pro-

<sup>c</sup> Semler. Hist. Eccl. vol. i.

<sup>d</sup> Sect. xxix.

phcey of Isaiah to the Messiah's sufferings<sup>e</sup>, and in his assertion that the Spirit of Christ spoke also by David<sup>f</sup>, the believer will scarcely be disposed to question or dissent from him. In one or two instances only does he appear to transgress the boundaries of legitimate interpretation.

But these (even admitting that the most objectionable of them<sup>g</sup> is not, what there appears some reason for suspecting it to be, an interpolation) are defects, which, in a fair and candid estimate of this most valuable remain of Christian antiquity, can be regarded as but trifling drawbacks on its claims to our respect, and its authority in questions of practice and doctrine. Altogether, the great character of this epistle is an earnest and practical application of scriptural admonition and reproof; a character which, it may be here briefly mentioned, it has in common with the shorter

<sup>e</sup> Sect. xvi.

<sup>f</sup> Sect. xxii.

<sup>g</sup> The notion, (grounded on a misconception of the scriptural comparison of the righteous to a palm tree, φοῖνιξ,) that the fabulous bird so named (phoenix) afforded a legitimate type of the resurrection.



epistles of Ignatius. The whole complexion of that attributed to Barnabas is very different, and seems to bespeak it a production, if not of late date, assuredly of a more fanciful and visionary mind. The author abounds in mystical expositions, many of which at the present day, even among those who are by no means inclined to discountenance such a practice, would find but few advocates. Some of these have reference to the person and sufferings of our blessed Lord; others appear traceable to some earlier, perhaps to a Jewish or Alexandrian source. Such is the belief already mentioned as attributed to Eleazar, that the division of animals into clean and unclean bore a typical analogy to the virtuous and vicious habits of man. Such perhaps the notion, that the three whose office it was to sprinkle the heifer of the Levitical sacrifice, enjoined in the 19th chapter of Numbers, were figurative of the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here too we find for the first time the opinion so widely prevalent in after-ages, that the duration of earthly things



was limited by the decree of the Almighty to a period of six thousand years; that period being shadowed out, as it was supposed, by the six days of the creation; an analogy for which support was derived from a single, and that an ill understood passage of the Psalmist; *In his sight a thousand years are but as a day*<sup>b</sup>. From a better and more sober school the writer appears to have derived most of his Christian applications of the prophetical writings, and of those portions of the Law which relate to the vicarious nature of all sacrifice. Here he errs (if error it be) only in pressing occasionally the parallel to some of the minuter circumstances of ritual observance; points, most assuredly, with respect to which, when urged by an uninspired writer, however ingenious his positions, or however pious his intentions, the Christian must be left to the free exercise of his own judgment and discretion. The other writings, attributed in earlier times to the first and purest age of the apostoli-

<sup>b</sup> Psalm lxxxix. 4.

cal church, have, by more learned and critical inquirers, been regarded (and that in most cases very justly) with so much of suspicion, that we cannot safely appeal to them, either as to the matter under our immediate consideration, or indeed as to any point of faith or practice. One however among these presents so remarkable a mixture as well of the methods employed by the philosophical adversaries of the rising church to invalidate its authority and refute its doctrines, as of the arguments used by some at least of its members in their defence, that it should not be passed entirely without notice. I allude to the Clementine homilies, extant both in the original Greek and, with much variation, in the Latin paraphrase of Rufinus; known usually by the name of the *Recognitions of St. Clement*<sup>i</sup>. That the author, whosoever he might be, was rather skilled in philoso-

<sup>i</sup> It is certainly doubtful whether the Latin of Rufinus may not present a more genuine form of the original than the Greek as it now stands: but in the present state of our knowledge, it appears safer to look for alterations and additions in that which we know to be a translation.

phy and philology than in the pure and universal principles of the Christian faith; and that he was either tainted with, or had derived from his philosophical studies, notions somewhat analogous to the heresy of the Ebionites, seems little doubtful. Nor is it improbable that the work, as we now possess it, may be a compilation from more than one original source, partially at least disfigured by interpolations. Still it is on many accounts highly interesting<sup>k</sup>, and it bears especially upon our present inquiry, as containing the earliest distinct recognition made by any one professing the Christian faith, of the principle already mentioned as having authorized, in the opinion of Philo, the widest laxity of allegorical interpretation; that the Scrip-

<sup>k</sup> So Mosheim, de Causis Supp. Libb. Sæc. 1. et 2. p. 259. “Liber quamvis ex eorum numero sit qui nullo  
“jure magnorum virorum nomina præ se ferunt, vel  
“ideo tamen haud segniter evolvi debet ab hōmine an-  
“tiquitatum Christianarum studioso, quod doctrinam,  
“disputandi rationem, et argumenta veterum illorum  
“hæreticorum clarius aliis exponit.” See also Diss. de  
turbata per recentiores Platonicos Ecclesia, pp. 176 et  
seq. where a full and accurate account of this singular  
work is given.

tures, namely, of the Old Testament, contained many things, which, unless so understood and expounded, were contrary to the nature and derogatory from the honour of the Supreme Being<sup>1</sup>; a position far too deeply and extensively influential in that school which still continued to seek in human philosophy an authoritative interpreter, and a guide, supplementary perhaps but hardly subordinate to the revealed word. The power of discerning, or affixing rather, such mystical speculations on the literal text, is of course highly exalted; κλεῖς τῆς βασιλείας, he affirms, γινώσις τῶν ἀπορρήτων<sup>m</sup>. His own practice is accordingly fanciful, even to licence. The Spirit of God, which at the first creation moved upon the face of the waters, he connects by a mystical analogy with the spiritual washing of Christian baptism. In the six days of creation he sees, like Philo,

<sup>1</sup> See Hom. XVIII. sect. 19. Ap. Clerici Patt. App. vol. i. p. 749. Also Hom. II. s. 38. p. 637. and elsewhere. The author of the Recognitions states the same *principle* yet more broadly, but does not so decidedly seek a remedy in the mystical sense.

<sup>m</sup> P. 743.

a type of its divine perfection. In the relative priority of Cain to Abel, of Israel to Isaac, of Esau to Jacob, of the coming of antichrist to that of our glorified Saviour; and even in the character of the birds successively dismissed from the ark, he finds (agreeably to that which he terms the *κανὼν συζυγίας*) illustrations of the preordained connection of moral evil with its appropriate remedy <sup>n</sup>. In general, he appears to reject much of the literal history of the Old Testament <sup>o</sup>, and affixes a long but not very intelligible allegory to that of our first parents, and their immediate progeny <sup>p</sup>. The more recondite, at least, of these mystical expositions he speaks of as matters of esoteric communication rather than popu-

<sup>n</sup> Hom. II. s. 16. p. 631. His theory of the necessary precedence of evil in all cases is at least questionable. His application of that theory *pro re nata* is to the last degree absurd. St. Peter is made to affirm on these grounds, that Simon Magus having *first* preached to the people of Cæsarea, must be an impostor; and himself as being the *second* must preach the truth. I cannot but regard Rosenmuller as too favourable in his opinion of this writer. See R. Hist. Interpretationis.

<sup>o</sup> Hom. II. s. 52. p. 640.

<sup>p</sup> Hom. III. sectt. 20. et seq. p. 645.

lar teaching; but he openly gives his testimony to that which was doubtless the faith of the universal church; “that our Lord  
 “was made known to the faithful under  
 “the old covenant, and that he is wise  
 “who sees in the revelations<sup>q</sup> of Moses and  
 “of Christ one God and one doctrine’.”

But I pass to one who, though perhaps he still retained on some points a false bias, derived from his philosophical education, has yet at all times occupied a much higher place in the estimation of the Christian world; *Justin*, usually surnamed the *Martyr*. The chief works remaining to us from the pen of this eminent believer are, as it is well known, two Christian Apologies, and a Dialogue (not altogether free from suspicion) with Trypho the Jew. In

<sup>q</sup> Hom. XVIII. s. 13. p. 747.

<sup>r</sup> Hom. VIII. s. 7. p. 682. In the *Recognitions* it is true (as Rosenmuller has observed) that there are more traces of the literal, and some reprobation of the allegorical interpretation of Scripture: but the author, or perhaps the translator, does not differ so materially in spirit from the *Clementina* as Rosenmuller has represented him to do. Compare especially p. 631. s. 15. et seq. with *Recog.* lib. 3. n. 55. 59. 61.



the former and longer of these Apologies, he follows the example of his predecessors in the faith, in applying largely and liberally to our Redeemer's person and kingdom the oracles of the Law and the Prophets. Here it cannot be denied, that he occasionally substitutes for the plainer and more literal meaning of the prophetic text an adaptation to higher objects, of which it is doubtless incapable. Thus, in the prophecy of Jacob concerning Judah, he applies not to the latter patriarch, but to the Shiloh, whose advent should cause his sceptre to depart from him, the verse which stands in our Bibles as the 11th; *Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine,—he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes*<sup>s</sup>. The former clause he adduces as prophetic of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem: the latter, of the cleansing his people (the typical vestments of the indwelling word) by the effusion of his blood. He conceives our Lord to be spoken of

<sup>s</sup> Genesis xlix. 11.

under the figure of the Just, in the first as well as the second Psalm; but appears elsewhere disposed to regard the words of David rather as primarily and directly prophetic of the Messiah, than as bearing or capable of a double application<sup>t</sup>. He urges, from a false translation or rather interpolation of the 10th verse of the 96th Psalm, that our Lord should reign from the cross, *κύριος ἐβασίλευσεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου*. It would be easy perhaps to select further instances of fanciful and careless interpretation from the Apology, and others yet more numerous and remarkable from the Dialogue with Trypho<sup>u</sup>; but these are of a truth neither in number nor weight to be compared with the expositions in which he still commands the assent of the pious and soberminded believer. It is assuredly the great merit of Justin, (not to insist upon the lessons of Christian holiness and self-

<sup>t</sup> Sect. 53.

<sup>u</sup> Especially from the latter sections of that Dialogue: but it should be recollected that some have entertained suspicions as to its genuineness, or at least its freedom from those later interpolations which seem to have extended to so many patristical remains.

devotion which adorn his writings,) that he no where indulges in that boldness of denying and explaining away the literal and intelligible sense of holy writ which characterized the Alexandrian school<sup>x</sup>.

But it is, as I have said, impossible altogether to exonerate Justin from the charge of a laxity of interpretation undemanded by and unserviceable to the cause of truth; nor is it pretended to justify such expositions, upon whatever theory they be adopted or applied. With the same wholesome suspicion therefore we are bound to regard many of those fanciful interpretations of Scripture which the venerable Irenæus has preserved, in his great work against heresies, as delivered to him by certain elders, probably of the Asiatic churches<sup>y</sup>; who stood by one generation at least nearer to the apostolic age than himself; and on these also the Christian is doubtless at

<sup>x</sup> Compare Trypho, sect. 21. on the meats forbidden by the Law, with the Comments of Aristobulus and Barnabas.

<sup>y</sup> See Grabe, Notes, p. 263.

full liberty to use his own judgment<sup>z</sup>. Though we may own the full beauty of the illustration, yet we could not press it in argument, that the extension of our Lord's arms upon the cross of his passion was typical of his embracing under the new covenant both Jew and Gentile; *δύω λαοὺς διεσπαρμένους ἐς πέρατα τῆς γῆς*. Though we should readily bow to the general law, that it is not ours to condemn where God hath not condemned, we cannot argue from that law that such faulty actions of the patriarchs and prophets as are not, like the sin of David, actually rebuked by him in his revealed word, must be understood in a typical sense alone<sup>a</sup>. Though we may firmly believe that all the operations and dispensations of God with regard to the universe, in which he has placed the reasonable creatures of his hand, are connected by links, “to us invisible or dimly

<sup>z</sup> For the excerption of these we are indebted to the pious and learned labours of one who is yet amongst us. Routh, in Rel. Sac. vol. i.

<sup>a</sup> See Routh, Rel. Sac. vol. i. p. 50.

“seen,” in one great and harmonious system of wisdom and benevolence; we may yet refuse to consider (as more than one of these early believers are said to have done) that the whole record of the creation is but a typical adumbration of the history of our Lord and his church<sup>b</sup>. We may receive most unhesitatingly the testimony of St. John, that by the Word all things were made; and yet may not derive any additional proof to that testimony from the simple and unequivocal statement of Moses, that in the beginning (ἐν ἀρχῇ<sup>c</sup>) God created the heaven and the earth. We may fully rest our faith and hopes on the all atoning power of our Redeemer’s blood; we may recognise in the lamb of the paschal sacrifice, in the institution, indeed, and vicarious nature of all sacrifice, a clear, intelligible, and consistent type of the character and necessity of the great work of propitiation; but may hesitate to affirm that that precious bloodshedding was pre-

<sup>b</sup> Routh, Rel. Sac. vol. i. p. 15.

<sup>c</sup> ἐν ἀρχῇ, i. e. ἐν Λόγῳ. Routh, Rel. Sac. vol. i. p. 91.

figured by the scarlet cord of Rahab<sup>d</sup>; or the exact manner of our Lord's passion, by the extended limbs of the victim<sup>e</sup>. But although in these and the like expositions of holy writ we condemn the want of judgment and sobriety, though we regret the handle which has thus been given to the attacks of the infidel and the scoffer; we should not forget that the passages thus perverted are in scarcely a single instance applied to the illustration of any doctrines but those which were held by the universal church, and which are capable of most ample and demonstrative proof from other sources. It is, too, the grossest want of candour and truth, to affirm or insinuate that the early fathers always argue in this lax and inconsiderate manner; and it may safely be added, that the most fanciful of their interpretations are, in comparison with the gross and absurd fictions extorted by the Valentinians and other contemporary heretics, not only from the

<sup>d</sup> This notion is to be found in Clemens, Justin against Trypho, and elsewhere. See Irenæus, p. 337. ed. Grabii.

<sup>e</sup> Justin c. Tryphon. sect. 40.



Old Testament, but from the teaching even of our Lord himself, the very *words of truth and soberness* <sup>f</sup>.

To Irenæus himself, (and in some degree perhaps to others among his contemporaries,) that which has already been said of Justin will, with some few exceptions, be found pretty closely applicable. The same copious use of the typical and prophetic parts of the Old Testament, with the same occasional extension of such a sense to portions of Scripture in which the instructed Christian of the present day will scarcely recognise it <sup>g</sup>, distinguish especially the great work in which that illustrious confessor exposed, with no small share of acuteness and erudition, the schemes of

<sup>f</sup> See Iren. pp. 34. 78. 156. 157. and elsewhere. So Tertullian of Theotimus; “ Multa circa imagines legis operatus est.” *Adv. Valentin.* cap. 4. That the spirit of their allegorical interpretation was very different from that which prevailed in the church, is evident from their rejecting the Epistles of St. Paul as savouring too much of the literal and historical sense. See Semler, *Hist. Eccl.* p. 42.

<sup>g</sup> Vid. lib. iii. cc. 27. 29. 31. 33. lib. iv. cc. 38. 49. 50. lib. v. c. 4. &c.

the early heresiarchs; schemes, which, if they were meant to be literally accepted, were both absurd and blasphemous; if they were considered as the veil of mere metaphysical abstractions and speculations<sup>h</sup>, were utterly useless as a religious creed, and repugnant both to the doctrines of the Gospel, and to the method in which those doctrines were propounded by its divine Author and his immediate followers. It appears to have contributed also to the disadvantage under which the fathers of this age occasionally exhibit themselves to the modern and more critical inquirer, that they were accustomed (besides adding somewhat of their own to the common stock) to adopt, without suspicion or examination, such mystical or allegorical comments as had already been promulgated by, or received the sanction of their pious and orthodox predecessors. This, too, renders it the more difficult, in proportion as

<sup>h</sup> This appears to be the opinion of Semler; (*De Gnosticis*, *Hist. Eccl.* vol. i. p. 40, &c.) but with all his undoubted erudition, his view of this subject is both uncandid and uncritical.

we recede from the age of the apostles, to affirm with any certainty, whether or no the exposition which has our assent or dissent did in reality originate with the author in whose works we find it. In a long and copious work of detail more especially, such as is that of Irenæus, it is by no means improbable that many things may have thus been taken upon trust from others. Such may possibly be the source of that remarkable passage in which, pressing too closely (a fault already adverted to) the analogy between Israel and the church, he draws, in reference to the spoiling the Egyptians, a conclusion not very dissimilar in its spirit to the dangerous position of after-times, that dominion is founded on grace; “Nobis secundum quid debitores  
“sunt ethnici, a quibus et lucra et utili-  
“tates percipimus; quæcunque illi *cum la-*  
“*bore* comparant, his nos in fide cum si-  
“mus, *sine labore* utimur.” He insists indeed that the wealth obtained from the heathen is to be employed in the service of the true religion; and there is somewhat of obscurity in the whole of his state-

ment and reasoning; but still as he urges the Christian's right "*per aliena Deo de-*" "servire" on the grounds of the universal agreement of the type and antitype, and strengthens it by the assertion that we are taught by prophecy to expect no less; "eas-  
 "dem plagas universaliter accipere gentes  
 "quas tunc particulatim accipiebat Æ-  
 "gyptus:" I cannot but admit (though with much reluctance) that even in this early age an imprudent and unwarrantable application of a scriptural type had led to one moral error of judgment at least, if not of practice<sup>1</sup>.

But this, although a very remarkable

<sup>1</sup> If I be proved to have misunderstood the language and argument of Irenæus in this singular passage, no one will be more gratified by the correction than myself. That the same doctrines were broached in later days we are well aware. Is it not possible that the whole paragraph, which is extant only in the Latin, may have been interpolated by the translator, or by some yet more recent hand? It should be added, that the most objectionable form of this tenet (the power of coercing heretics by the sword) was not thought of until long after the age of Irenæus, not indeed until the Arians employed it against the orthodox. See Mosheim's dissertation on persecution in his *Diss. ad Disciplinas Sanctorum pert.*

and not uninformative instance of the faulty excess to which this mode of interpretation is peculiarly liable, should by no means be regarded as exemplifying the general tone and character which pervades the spiritual expositions of Irenæus. On the contrary, these are almost uniformly (in strict agreement with a canon explicitly and prudently laid down by himself) nothing more than adaptations of scriptural history and language to those fundamental truths which had been plainly revealed, and generally acceded to by the whole body of the church. Such (affirms the venerable pastor) is the ὀρθὴ νοῦς καὶ ἀκίνδυνος καὶ εὐλαβὴς καὶ φιλαληθής; and its objects are those things only, Ὅσα φανερώς καὶ ἀναμφιβόλως ἀποτολεῖται ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς λέλεκται<sup>k</sup>; and it is evident, that the due observance of this rule of truth, if it did not always secure the expositor from the danger of misinterpreting and misapplying the Scriptures, would at least fully exonerate him from the charge

<sup>k</sup> See lib. ii. cap. 46. which, with the one preceding it, is well worth the perusal of the student.

of mischievously perverting and dishonouring them<sup>1</sup>. But, to the power of thus illustrating the great articles of our faith, the "Ὅσα ἐν παραβολαῖς εἴρηται, προσεπεργάζεσθαι, καὶ οἰκειοῦν τῇ τῆς πίστεως ὑποθέσει"<sup>m</sup>, he assigns a rank, subordinate indeed (as he piously and wisely urges with the apostle) to the great Christian grace of charity<sup>n</sup>, but still among the highest gifts of an enlightened intellect<sup>o</sup>. In the abstract position we may not perhaps altogether dissent from his authority, however in some cases we be disposed to withhold so high a praise from those mystical interpretations to which it may have given rise. Above all, it should be remembered that neither these, nor any other peculiarities which may be observed in this learned and valuable controversialist, have the remotest tendency to impeach or to obscure the great and universal founda-

<sup>1</sup> Thus as he truly urges elsewhere, (lib. i. cap. 3.) Οὔτε ὁ πάνυ δυνατὸς ἐν τῷ Λόγῳ ἑτέρα τούτων ἐξεῖ, οὔτε ὁ ἀσθενὴς ἐν τῷ Λόγῳ ἐλαττώσει τὴν παράδοσιν.

<sup>m</sup> Lib. i. cap. 4.

<sup>n</sup> Lib. ii. cap. 45.

<sup>o</sup> See lib. i. cap. 4.



tions of our religion<sup>p</sup>. The characters of grace and benevolence impressed on the several dispensations vouchsafed by a long-suffering God and Father to his erring and ungrateful children; the great truth that he had concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all<sup>q</sup>; that his Word was in the latter days made flesh, and was revealed to and suffered for man; the resurrection to judgment and to life; the admission of the Gentiles to an equal participation in the present and future blessings of Christ's spiritual kingdom: these are the true materials, he contends, of Christian instruction; these, and not the imaginations of man, are the objects in which the believer will recognise and adore the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. Such was the faith, such the preaching of Irenæus and his contemporaries; men, who for that faith were

<sup>p</sup> See his enumeration of these subjects of Christian research and teaching as above, (lib. i. cap. 4.) which is well worth the consulting.

<sup>q</sup> Whether Irenæus read τὰ πάντα, or τοὺς πάντας, it is evident (from lib. iii. cap. 22.) that he understood the expression to signify mankind.

content to forego every worldly good, to suffer the loss of fortune, friends, liberty, and life itself: men, entitled by the fairest and fullest claims to the gratitude and respect of the church which they instructed and adorned; towards whom it is at all events the height of injustice to insinuate (as some have done) that they were less spiritually minded than the turbulent and visionary pretenders to philosophy who opposed them<sup>r</sup>.

With Irenæus, in point of age, congeniality of subject and opinions, and attachment to the faith and traditions received from his predecessors, we may fairly class the great patriarch and champion of the Latin church, Tertullian. For our present object, it is indifferent whether we seek our materials in such of his works as are tinged with the peculiarities of the Montanistæ, or such as are supposed to have been written before his adoption of those notions. That which he borrowed from this sect (for it appears certain that he never embraced the whole of their erroneous and enthusiastic

<sup>r</sup> Conf. Semler, *Hist. Eccl.* ut supra, p. 102.

views<sup>s</sup>) does not seem to have exercised any material influence on his theory of scriptural interpretation. The secondary and spiritual sense of many parts of the revealed word, Tertullian held and applied in common with his fellow-labourers; but even with respect to prophecy itself he enforces a limitation, which, even though his practice be not always consistent with it, we may yet believe to have had the approval of his judgment: “Non semper nec in omnibus allegorica est forma prophetici eloquii, sed interdum et in quibusdam<sup>t</sup>.” So he elsewhere objects to the sophistry of those who allegorized the whole teaching of our blessed Lord: “Non semper nec omnia parabolæ, sed quædam et ad quosdam<sup>u</sup>.” He reprobates too, with Irenæus, the lax and mystical interpretations of Scripture by which the Valentinians endeavoured to recommend to Christians a theory in fact as unphilosophical as it was

<sup>s</sup> V. Schutz *Jud. Latinit. Tertull.* p. 489. sub v. *Psychicus*.

<sup>t</sup> *De Resur. Carnis*, cap. 20. sub fine.

<sup>u</sup> *De Resur. Carn.* cap. 33.

unscriptural<sup>x</sup>. In many places of his writings he does not materially deviate from the spirit of moderation and sobriety which dictated these canons; and his arguments, though clothed in language frequently obscure and unclassical, and always in a style rather forcible than pleasing, are thus rendered far more satisfactory and conclusive than the pride of modern criticism has been willing to admit<sup>y</sup>. Frequently, however, the warmth of his temperament, the fertility of his imagination, and the example perhaps of those whom he followed and admired, have betrayed him into expositions against which his own principles, though neither so definite or particular as it were desirable, might yet (we should apprehend) have fully guarded him. Thus he ventures to urge in one place<sup>z</sup>, that the phrase used in our Lord's Prayer, *in earth as in heaven*, (though he does not deny its

<sup>x</sup> De Præscript. Hæret. cap. 39. See also, Adv. Hermogenem, cap. 34. where he appears to contend almost too strongly for the acceptance of the strict literal sense also even in those passages which are figurative.

<sup>y</sup> V. Semler, Diss. in Tertull. lib. i. cap. 11.

<sup>z</sup> De Oratione, cap. 4.

primary and literal sense,) bears a mystical reference to the body and soul of man<sup>a</sup>. This however is, I had almost said, compensated for by the real spirituality of an exposition which immediately follows it; “*Veniat quoque regnum tuum ad id pertinet quod et fiat voluntas tua, in nobis scilicet;*” were not the beauty of the axiom somewhat obscured by the tone of the succeeding paragraphs<sup>b</sup>. The petition, *Give us this day our daily bread*, he accepts in the literal, but prefers a spiritual sense; not grounding that sense upon a different acceptation of the word ὑπερούσιον, but on the well known use of the sacramental bread, as the symbol of our Lord’s body. In the injunction of the patriarch Joseph to his brethren, *See that ye fall not out by the way*, he interprets the word *via* to mean, in a secondary acceptation, the Christian communion; “*Via cognominatur disciplina nostra;*” and the exercise of prayer;

<sup>a</sup> Much similar trifling on the mystic signification of the word *terra* may be found in the treatise *De Resurrectione*, where however it is rather insinuated hypothetically, than used as a direct argument.

<sup>b</sup> *De Oratione*, cap. 5.

so that the incidental advice of the text is made to contain the two general precepts, That Christian brethren should not disagree, and that we should not approach God in prayer while we harbour enmity against a fellow-creature<sup>c</sup>. By far the greater portion of Tertullian's mystical expositions are, like the foregoing, much more indefensible on the score of criticism than on that of piety or morality. On this and on some other points his memory has been treated with far too much of harshness and contempt by those who have occasionally shewn themselves by no means his superiors, either in the art of reasoning, or the command and correctness of language<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> See the application also of Ps. xlv. 1. and of Exodus xx. 7. in the book against Praxeas, cap. 7. of Genesis viii. 11. in cap. viii. de Baptismo, and the whole 9th chap. of the same book; in cap. iii. of which he also applies Genesis i. 2. to the water of baptism nearly in the tone of the Clementina, (see above, p. 92.) The whole section is among the weakest and most *questionable* instances of such trifling. This, and the book De Oratione, appear to have been written before Tertullian became a Montanist.

<sup>d</sup> See Semler, Diss. in Tertull. p. 263. and the general spirit of his remarks on this age in his various works on



While, however, we make every allowance for his deficiencies, while we admit and respect the talent, the piety, and the self-devotion which are unquestionably conspicuous in his writings, we may with full consistency regret that the church of after-ages, instead of using freely their Christian privilege in the discrimination and selection of that which was really profitable for doctrine and for edification, should, even to the partial adoption of that which he derived from an impure and questionable source, have paid so implicit a deference to his authority. That deference we have learned to pay only, where only it is at all times due, to the revealed word of God. To that word may we never be found backward to render it in truth and singleness of heart; and may this our reasonable service and submission be blessed and accepted, for the sake of our acknowledged Lord and Saviour.

ecclesiastical history. Nor is Rosenmuller fully exempt from the same *liberal* prejudices.



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## LECTURE IV.

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1 CORINTHIANS ii. 5.

*That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men.*

IN surveying the mode of scriptural interpretation adopted by Irenæus and Tertullian, it was remarked, that howsoever questionable and indefensible might be their mystical exposition of many passages both of the Old and New Testament, they were yet careful, with very few exceptions, to apply the passages so expounded to the illustration of that only which was either unequivocally related or taught in holy writ, or fairly and evidently deducible from its general and constant tenor: to speak more technically, that all their interpretations were conformed to that system of catechetical and symbolical instruction, which constituted the *παράδοσις* of the Greek, and the *regula fidei* of the Latin

father: that the so *holding fast* to those which they regarded as the great and fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and the preserving these from any admixture of those foreign materials with which the philosophical genius of some, and the enthusiastic fancies of others, were even in this early age disposed to modify and distort, if not in some cases entirely to obliterate their genuine character and value, was undoubtedly their constant aim. It is manfully and eloquently avowed by the latter<sup>a</sup>. “*Quid Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid Academiæ et Ecclesiæ? Nostra institutio de porticu Salomonis est, qui et ipse tradiderat Dominum in simplicitate cordis esse colendum. Viderint qui Stoicum et Platonicum Christianismum protulerunt!*” It has in later years been but too much the custom of those who have written most fully and learnedly upon subjects of ecclesiastical history, to represent these venerable men, upon this account chiefly, as persons of most limited views

<sup>a</sup> Tertull. De Præscript. Hæret. c. 6.

and capacities, as substituting a carnal and Judaizing system in the place of the Christian liberty proclaimed and authorized by our Lord and his apostles; while upon those who shook off such supposed restraints upon conscience, whatsoever might be the extent of their eccentricities, their unbelief, or even their opposition to the Gospel, the higher title of *πνευματικοὶ* is freely and pretty indiscriminately conferred<sup>b</sup>. Yet, in truth, so far as we have the means of ascertaining the fact<sup>c</sup>, the

<sup>b</sup> This is the constant tone of Semler and his imitators. (See Obs. Nov. in H. E. sæc. II. cap. 23. sæc. III. cap. 49. and elsewhere.) The orthodox fathers have not always however reason to complain of the company in which he places them. “*Cujus mediocritatis*” (he ventures to assert with respect to one point of their common belief) “*vestigia varia etiam in libris apostolorum inveniuntur.*” Ibid. p. 35.

<sup>c</sup> It is surely begging the question, to affirm or insinuate that the orthodox fathers always misunderstood or misrepresented the tenets which they opposed. The occasional wildness and absurdity of those tenets does not render it incredible that they should have gained many adherents. Parallels might readily and plentifully be found in the history of human opinions; and least of all has the modern German a right to doubt, that a fanciful and incoherent mysticism may occasionally have been mistaken for philosophy.

church did not at this early period separate from the communion of any but such as could not, upon any conceivable plan of fellowship and cooperation, have remained in union with her. Nor does it appear from the vestiges yet preserved of these ancient formularies, (if we may so venture to term them,) that they were otherwise than simple, intelligible, and useful statements of scriptural doctrine. And, what is more immediately to our present purpose, it is evident that their adoption as a standard and limitation of the mystical expositions daily increasing in number and popularity, was calculated to prevent one great abuse at least of such a method. Where that standard was deferred to, their authors were secured from doctrinal, if not from critical and grammatical errors.

We pass now to a different school; equally, or yet more strongly indeed attached to the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, but applying the contents of that Scripture, not so much to the illustration of Christian doctrine, as to that of the speculative tenets still maintained by



the Platonists, or rather eclectics of Alexandria: a school so entirely formed, as to all its essential characters, and much even of its detail, upon that which in a preceding age gave birth to the reveries of Philo, as to claim, whatsoever else may be its praise, but little of that which is due to originality of genius and invention<sup>d</sup>. The great luminaries of that school (and to these we must chiefly for the present confine ourselves) were Clemens of Alexandria and the well known Origen; men of most extensive erudition, and, the latter especially, of various and cultivated talent; men, too, whose sincerity in the faith (according to their own view of the Christian dispensation) was unquestionable; and whom therefore we would mention only with respect and gratitude, although we may regard their mystical and philosophical adaptations of the sacred oracles as faulty, not in their method only, but in their first and leading principles<sup>e</sup>. Of

<sup>d</sup> Vide Mosheim de Reb. C. ante Const. M. p. 302.

<sup>e</sup> There does not seem any very substantial reason for regarding the Platonic Christianity of Alexandria with

these two eminent Christians it is almost needless to say that Clemens was by many years the senior. It is equally well known that he had assiduously sought the instruction of the ablest men who presided over the philosophical schools of the city from whence he derives his usual title; and that under that instruction he became the zealous partisan of the system which he himself describes as the φιλοσοφία ἐκλεκτική. The constituent parts of this system, all, that is, which bore the impress of truth and usefulness in the speculations or precepts of his Grecian masters, he appears to have regarded as flowing originally from the same great source of inspiration with those Scriptures, to which, as a believer, he undoubtedly ascribed a yet more unquestionable and paramount authority. The heathen sages he held to have been thus

more complacency than the Aristotelic theology of the schoolmen. The effects of the admixture have been traced by Mosheim with a patience and precision not to be set aside by the oracular “Haud scio an multum me-  
“ritus sit” of Semler. See Mosheim. Diss. de turbata per recentiores Platonicos Ecclesia; especially the latter part, “de malis internis.”

benefited—(and he carries his notions of this benefit to a much further extent than the warmest advocates of such a system would now venture to do)—the heathen sages he held to have been thus benefited, either indirectly, by a knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures and traditions<sup>f</sup>, or directly, by the illumination of that divine word which lighteth every man. Upon this latter point, a point, under whatsoever form it be proposed, of no common difficulty, Clemens is not without the obscurity incidental to all those whose religious or philosophical creed are tinged with mysticism<sup>g</sup>. But perfect clearness and intelligibility seem at no time to have been the distinguishing characteristics of the Alexandrian school: perhaps, under the present imperfection of our intellect, and limitation of our knowledge, they are never

<sup>f</sup> Πλάτων παρὰ Μωυσείως ἔλαβε. Stromat. lib. v. cap. 13. p. 696.

<sup>g</sup> The same obscurity, and upon nearly the same point, distinguished the works of the earlier Quakers. See especially William Penn's addresses.

to be hoped for in the highest departments of metaphysical and theological speculation.

As the extent of erudition displayed in the works remaining to us from the pen of Clemens Alexandrinus have long since rendered them familiar to the classical as well as to the biblical scholar, it is needless perhaps to say that they consist chiefly of two treatises, considerable both for their size and for the variety of matter which they contain; the *Παιδαγωγὸς*, or Schoolmaster to Christ, in which light he regards (as I have said) the philosophy of the heathen as well as the theology of the chosen people; and the *Στρώματα*, a desultory and miscellaneous compilation of the opinions of himself and others upon various topics, religious, moral, and philosophical. Of a work which, if still extant, would in all probability enable us to speak yet more decidedly and fully as to the method of scriptural interpretation pursued by its learned author, the *Ἑποτυπώσεις*, we have but a few insulated fragments left to us. If however

we may trust the representation of later ages as to its general character<sup>h</sup>, Clemens must have sacrificed at the shrine of his favourite eclecticism that which is not only the unquestionable doctrine of revelation, but is essentially necessary to all just and philosophical notions of the nature and attributes of the great First Cause. He must have denied the creative energy of Omnipotence, grafting upon his purer faith, and incorporating even with a professed exposition of Scripture the dangerous and untenable dogma of the eternal and independent existence of matter. That he followed in many subordinate points a system assuredly unauthorized by, if not at actual variance with, the revealed word, is sufficiently evident from those ample and varied productions of his pen which are yet preserved to us. Nor is it less evident, that in the adoption of this system, and in the allegorical adaptation of Scripture to its support and illustration, he is the close imitator, often, indeed, the mere transcriber

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Photii Bibl. sub titulo Clementis.

of Philo Judæus. He had learnt assuredly to modify the expositions of his predecessor by the introduction of matter more immediately Christian; but still the great outlines both of his theory and its application are the same, and liable of course to the same objections both on the score of critical and theological consistency. The canons (if they may so be termed) of allegorical interpretation adopted by Clemens have been investigated and illustrated by the labours of more than one biblical scholar<sup>i</sup>. For our present purpose it is sufficient to say, that he regarded nearly the whole of Scripture as bearing an enigmatical or allegorical character; *σχεδὸν ἡ πᾶσα ᾧδε πως (δι' αἰνίγματα) θεσπίζεται γραφή*<sup>k</sup>. He

<sup>i</sup> They will be found in Rosenmüller's *Historia Interpretationis S. S.* (under the article *Clemens Alex.*) and inserted (from that source) in the 4th vol. of Bauer's edition of *Glass.*; a work however not to be recommended without a caution as to its infidel tendency. Walchius (a writer of far different character) has dedicated a long and learned dissertation to the subject of Clemens. It is well worth the student's perusal. See also the learned and accurate note in Mosheim. *De Rebus Christ. ante Constant. M.* \*\* p. 299.

<sup>k</sup> *Stromat. lib. v. p. 664. ed. Potter.*



elsewhere states his belief, that the meaning of the Mosaic law was fourfold ; literal, moral, mystical, and prophetic<sup>1</sup>. In applying the commencement of the book of Genesis to the Platonic theory of an ideal or archetypal universe ; and in allegorizing the description of paradise and the history of our first parents, he is the imitator, almost indeed the very transcriber, of Philo. In the tree of life however he sees a type of that cross which was made instrumental in bringing life and immortality to light ; an addition which may illustrate what has been noticed as to his occasional engraftment of Christian matter on the fancies of his Jewish predecessor<sup>m</sup>. Nor was this a work requiring any great share of invention or research, since it consisted in little else than applying to the incarnate Word of God that which Philo had already applied to the Λόγος of his own theosophy.

<sup>1</sup> Stromat. lib. i. cap. 28. He defends his system by the immediate authority of Plato : Ἀμύητοι οἱ πράξεις καὶ γενέσεις καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἀόρατον οὐκ ἀποδεχόμενοι, ὡς ἐν οὐσίαις μέρει. Plat. Theætet. See also Strom. p. 675.

<sup>m</sup> Pp. 86. 690.

The history of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah, he applies to the progress of the enlightened mind from the region of mere human acquirements to that of higher and diviner knowledge, in the spirit altogether, if not in the very language of Philo, forgetting or disregarding the previous and authoritative exposition of that history left us by the apostle<sup>n</sup>. In his allusions to the temple, and ceremonial law of Moses, he constantly recurs to the same authority, modifying his original in the same manner. Thus in various parts of the temple, even in its bells and lesser ornaments, he sees the person, in the year of jubilee, the acceptable time of the Redeemer. Nor does Clemens even hesitate to affix more than one allegorical sense to the same passage; even where that passage, literally accepted, should seem to be matter of the simplest and most intelligible character. Thus in the three days journey of Abraham, previous to the offering of Isaac, he discerns the progressive advancement of the human

<sup>n</sup> Stromat. p. 335. Mosheim (De R. C. p. 301.) appears to have overlooked the source of this exposition.

mind towards the comprehension of the ideal universe, (figured under the place afar off;) the ἀσωμάτων ιδέων ἀσώματος χώρα of his master. The same event he conceives also to afford an adumbration of the three Persons of the blessed Trinity; and the third of those days to prefigure that on which our Lord rose from the dead. Whatsoever were the nature of those canons of allegory to which the writers of this school are wont to appeal, it is sufficiently evident that they enjoined nothing of a prohibitory or limitative character beyond the general law already alluded to, that the expositions should not contain or insinuate any tenets contrary to the general analogy of the Christian faith. Even this law, we have seen that the Platonizing Christian, either from his love of philosophical speculation, or from a real misconception of the sense and purport of Scripture °, was not unfrequently led to violate.

° It may here be noticed, and might indeed have been urged before, in extenuation of the peculiarities of Philo and his imitators, that one great key-stone of their system, the accommodation of Scripture to the theory of an

In his occasional applications of the Psalms and Prophets, Clemens is not less fanciful; and he extends, literally and undoubtingly, the same principles of interpretation even to the plain narratives of the Gospel. Thus the five loaves miraculously blessed by our Lord to the sustenance of so great a multitude, are interpreted to be the five senses of man; and the feet of the Redeemer himself, bedewed (as he expresses it) by the ointment of repentance, to typify either the doctrines of truth, or the apostles who preached those doctrines<sup>p</sup>; though in this latter exposition he admits himself to be open to the charge of excess<sup>q</sup>. Even the simple and pathetic lamentation of our Redeemer over

ideal universe, had, partly at least, its origin in the Septuagint translation of the first chapter of Genesis: “the earth was without form.” (Sept. AOPATOS.)

<sup>p</sup> This exposition of the word “feet” is repeated by him elsewhere. We shall soon have occasion to notice, that the mystical acceptation of certain words and phrases, regulated perhaps by custom or tradition, seems to have formed a part of the κανόνες ἀλληγορίας.

<sup>q</sup> Εἰ μὴ φορτικὸς εἶναι δοκῶ. Παιδαγωγ. lib. 2. The whole section is however replete with allegories scarcely less defensible.

the fate of those to whom he came *as unto his own, and who received him not*; in which, gracious, and pregnant with instruction and warning as it is, one could scarcely have supposed that any one would seek for a meaning beyond that which is literal and obvious, is perverted by the same cold, I had almost said, the same heartless affectation of philosophical refinement. Jerusalem is made to typify the inquirers after divine truth, and the oft repeated invitations of the Saviour are the means of philosophical and moral discipline (the *προπαιδεύματα*) by which the mind progressively arrives at that truth. It may be added, that the works of Clemens exhibit much of obscurity, and somewhat of real or apparent inconsistency. Attached therefore as he evidently was to the allegorical method, it is not easy to pronounce exactly what degree of authority or argumentative value he might attribute to that method. He had however, we are told, received it from his master Pantænus, who is stated, even in his professed commentaries on various parts of Scripture, to have applied it

in its fullest extent<sup>1</sup>. These commentaries, which would doubtless have served to throw considerable light upon the earlier history of mystical interpretation, have long since been lost; a fate which, to the no small detriment of sacred literature, they have shared in common with many documents of the first and second centuries; from which, were they extant or restored to us, the scholar might derive much of historical and of doctrinal information.

The time and attention which have been dedicated to the earlier expositors of the Alexandrian school will very well admit of our passing, more rapidly than might possibly have been anticipated, over the labours of one, whose name is more generally and intimately associated with the history of allegorical interpretation than that of any among his predecessors; of any ancient commentator perhaps upon the Scriptures, whose works remain to us. Nor in this place could it be needful indeed, or desirable, to enter at length into any details as

<sup>1</sup> V. Mosheim, *ut supra*, p. 300.



to the character and opinions of the illustrious Origen. Every scholar, who has in any measure applied himself to the study of biblical criticism or ecclesiastical history, must be sufficiently conversant with the memory and tenets of one, who, through good report and evil report, has in all ages attracted that attention to which his learning, genius, and piety (however at times mistaken) gave him an undoubted title. It will be remembered, too, that our present concern is not with those critical and controversial labours by which he conferred so unquestionable a benefit upon the Christian church, but solely with his philosophical and spiritual applications of the literal text of Scripture; and with regard to these, however by the weight of his authority and talents he may have contributed to their popularity in after-ages, he is assuredly neither entitled to the praise (if praise it be) of originality, nor justly subject to the imputation of having first obtruded them upon the church as legitimate vehicles of doctrinal and moral instruction. His philosophical creed, his

theory of interpretation, the arguments by which it is justified, and the manner in which it is applied, are precisely those which his predecessors in the Alexandrian school had adopted from Philo. His labours indeed were more extensive, and, from having been collected under the form of somewhat like a perpetual commentary upon many parts of holy writ, became the more readily (if I may so express myself) a store-house and a text-book for those who succeeded him. Hence, even with those who were far from uninstructed or unpractised in the criticism of the sacred writings, he has been occasionally alluded to as the first advocate, if not the actual inventor of the allegorical system<sup>s</sup>. A very brief reference to the voluminous productions of this extraordinary man will be sufficient to illustrate and justify the remarks which have already been offered. In the collection made from

<sup>s</sup> Even the learned Sixtinus Amama appears to have fallen, partially at least, into this error: “Præcipua  
“mali labes ab Origene fuit.” *Antibarbarus Bibl.* lib. i.  
Er. Gen. vii. Dupin was perhaps among the earliest  
who formed a more accurate judgment. (Method of studying Divinity; Engl. Transl. p. 140.)

his works under the title of *Philocalia*, a considerable section is dedicated to the object of shewing, that the allegorical is the only method by which the Scriptures can be explained in a manner worthy of their divine Author, or even intelligible to the hearer<sup>t</sup>. Here he extends that method to the Levitical prohibitions concerning food in the Old, and to the temptation of our Lord in the New Testament. In his answer to Celsus, who, like Porphyry<sup>u</sup>, had, with but too much reason, objected to Christians the invalidity of arguments drawn from mystical interpretation, he states that interpretation to be fully defensible<sup>x</sup>, and refers for its defence to his commentary upon Genesis; probably to the very portions of it which are preserved in the *Philocalia*. He considers therefore, and presses it as actually having the force

<sup>t</sup> *Philocalia*, Cap. Περὶ τοῦ δεῖν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄξιον νοῦν ἐν τοιαύτοις (ἀδυνάτοις) ζητεῖν.

<sup>u</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. vi. cap. 19.

<sup>x</sup> *Contra Cels.* (ed. Spenc.) p. 14. Compare Hom. XIII. in *Genesin*. Thus in arguing against Celsus (p. 192.) he adopts the mystical exposition attached by Philo to the σύνοδοι θεραπεινῶν.

of argumentative proof; an error which, however partially atoned for by the cogency and value of his reasonings from other grounds, is yet assuredly to be regretted, as laying him justly open to the reprehension of his acute and subtle adversary. Elsewhere he defends this practice by the authority of St. Paul<sup>y</sup>, and seems occasionally (not altogether perhaps without reason) to oppose the superior usefulness of the spiritual, to the barely literal and carnal sense in which some passages were received by the more ignorant and superstitious of his contemporaries<sup>z</sup>. He loses, indeed, no opportunity of urging and magnifying its value.

In his exposition of the earlier sections of the Pentateuch, Origen treads so closely in the footsteps of Clemens and of Philo, that any abstract of that exposition must of necessity present little better than a recapitulation of what has been already adduced. I confine myself therefore to a few remarkable examples of his opinions, and his man-

<sup>y</sup> Origen. Huetii, vol. ii. p. 136.

<sup>z</sup> Περὶ τῶν Ζεβεδαίου, p. 411.

ner of affixing them to the sacred text. In the history of the tower of Babel, and the dispersion of its builders, he contends that there is involved a spiritual meaning of such dignity that he fears to reveal it<sup>a</sup>. Elsewhere he affirms that the Scripture contains some mysteries so far beyond human comprehension, as to be incapable of explanation; and instances the thunders of the Apocalypse and the unspeakable things heard by St. Paul<sup>b</sup>. It is evident that one who could thus trifle with his readers must at times have permitted to his fancy an entire dominion over his better judgment. Nor can we wonder that such a writer is frequently inconsistent with himself; or that the endeavours of learned men to reduce his method of allegory to any thing like determinate and intelligible principles, or to defend and extenuate his practice, have been attended with but little success<sup>c</sup>. And what indeed

<sup>a</sup> Contra Celsum, p. 250.

<sup>b</sup> Hom. vol. ii. p. 201.

<sup>c</sup> See the critique of Rosenmuller on the attempts of Mosheim. (Hist. Interpret. article *Origen*.) The de-

could be affirmed with safety as to the opinions of him, who at one time admits that it is needless to seek for allegories where the letter tends to edification<sup>d</sup>, and at another, affirms that there is not an iota, either in the Law or the Prophets, which has not a mystic sense<sup>e</sup>: who objects to the heterodox, that by their allegorical interpretation they referred the miracles of our Lord to the cure of spiritual diseases only<sup>f</sup>; and was yet himself virtually guilty of the very same error, in applying to those miracles an explanation, which, by his own confession, was uncalled for, wheresoever Christian instruction might be derived from the letter? In the historical portions of the *Old Testament*, we might certainly expect an interpreter like Origen

fence of Huet, however elegant and ingenious, is yet unsatisfactory.

<sup>d</sup> Hom. in Num. xi.

<sup>e</sup> Hom. in Exod. i. Rosenmuller has attempted his defence, but is constrained to admit him “sibi non satis “constitisse.” Rosenmuller’s aim, like that of Semler and others, appears to have been the depreciating the labours and impeaching the judgment of Mosheim.

<sup>f</sup> Hom. in Joan. viii. vol. ii. p. 308.



to find (even on the milder and more mitigated scheme, which professed only to raise all things to its own philosophical standard of dignity) frequent opportunities for the exercise of his ingenuity; and this he accordingly does with more or less of plausibility. That the wrestling of Jacob, for instance, was spiritual, we can easily conceive him to have been himself persuaded. That the well of that patriarch typified the Scriptures, and its waters our Redeemer<sup>g</sup>, is assuredly more difficult of belief. The assertion that Naaman erred through ignorance, not knowing the baptismal waters of Jordan to possess a spiritual efficacy<sup>h</sup>, though by no fair means deducible from the literal text, is at least destitute neither of piety or beauty. That Joshua, inasmuch as he led the chosen people into the land of promise, was a type of the great Captain of our salvation, might appear to those who do not altogether reject the typical application of the Old Testament, far from improbable. But that all

<sup>g</sup> Vol. ii. p. 201.

<sup>h</sup> Vol. ii. p. 137.

the warfare of Joshua presented a continued picture of the spiritual victories of his great antitype, few would grant. Still less should we hold it to follow, (as Origen affirms it to do,) that, because the sacrifices and ceremonial of the Jewish temple are confessedly typical, the whole history of the Jewish people must be typical also<sup>i</sup>; and that were it otherwise, the first preachers of the Gospel of peace would not have permitted it to be read in the churches<sup>k</sup>. Upon this principle however we do not wonder to find him teaching, that the downfall of the walls of Jericho at the sound of the trumpet clearly prefigures the ruin and prostration of the strong holds of sin and Satan before the preaching of the word; or seeing in the destruction of the heathen princes of Libnah, of Lachish, and of Ai, the death unto sin, and translation to light and life, of souls beset, and held in darkness

<sup>i</sup> Homil. X. in Josh. This and the following sections of his commentary on Joshua are well calculated to illustrate the allegorical method of Origen, and the grounds on which he defends it.

<sup>k</sup> Josh. Hom. XV.

and captivity by the various evil dispositions and habits of our fallen nature<sup>1</sup>.

In these and the like interpretations, as where, for instance, he sees in Jael the type of the church, and in Sisera that of the carnal man, Origen possibly imagined himself to find some arguments in defence of his favourite notions of the remedial nature of all punishment, and the final restoration of the whole spiritual universe to the state which had been interrupted and impaired by the entrance of sin<sup>m</sup>.

That the same excessive tone of mysticism should pervade his commentaries upon those parts of the Old Testament which are confessedly prophetic of things to come, might readily be anticipated and overlooked<sup>n</sup>; but the manner in which he

<sup>1</sup> Josh. Hom. XIII.

<sup>m</sup> See Περὶ Ἀρχῶν, lib. ii. c. 11. where he affirms, that there are "*imagines*" in Scripture which favour this opinion. Compare Hom. in Exod. x. 27.

<sup>n</sup> See his exposition of the driving the money-changers from the temple, especially p. 173. vol. 2. ed. Huet. In general, however, Origen does not appear to question the history. His expositions of our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem, and of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, will

applies his theory to the exposition of the New is altogether indefensible. It is indeed calculated to excite both wonder and regret, that one so distinguished for learning, genius, and, it may fairly be added, for piety, should have attached so little of value to the plain, literal, and practical exposition of the text; should have spoken at times as though doubtful, not only of the worth, but even the truth of the simplest narratives, unless viewed through the medium of allegory°. Not only in the parables and the actions or institutions expressly recorded as having a symbolical and spiritual meaning, but in every miracle, every speech, (I had almost said,) and every movement of our blessed Lord, in every mention of time, place, or outward circumstance, he finds a mystical designation of somewhat more closely and highly connected with the progress of the Gospel,

afford a sufficient example of his general manner; they are fully illustrative of what is stated above.

° It is not unworthy of notice, that his commentary on the book of Job is unusually free from attempts at allegory. He probably regarded that extraordinary work as already sufficiently philosophical and spiritual.

and the reception of Christ into the hearts of his faithful people.

Both the limits of this discourse, and the reluctance to throw any thing approaching to ridicule upon labours which, however unsound in their critical foundation, are, for the most part, if considered abstractedly from that foundation, of a highly Christian and edifying character, will sufficiently plead my excuse for not entering into the details of those expositions, which subjected their author to the suspicion of wishing to reduce our Lord to the merely allegorical type of a higher and more exclusively spiritual Saviour, the unseen and eternal Word of God<sup>p</sup>. The accusation, though in the main groundless, derived but too much countenance from the vague and inconsiderate manner in which this eminent father frequently expressed himself.

<sup>p</sup> See the Apology of Pamphilus, usually subjoined to the works of Origen. Indeed, if fairly examined, Origen does not appear to deny the historical portions even of the Old Testament.

I cannot however quit this part of our subject without repeating what has already been urged in his exculpation, what does in fact constitute his *personal* exculpation, both on this, and on matters perhaps of yet higher importance; that he did not, namely, either invent or first introduce into that branch of the Christian church to which he was attached, any of those opinions which he is so generally known to have entertained. That the opinions themselves, and the manner in which the plain text of Scripture was often perverted to their support, are indefensible, is allowed on all hands; but he who fairly estimates all the circumstances of the case will find, in the prejudices of education, and the force of early habit and example, no inconsiderable or unavailing excuse for their illustrious advocate; will rise even from the perusal of his writings with much of admiration and respect, not unmingled perhaps with somewhat of regret, and, above all, with a salutary conviction of the insufficiency of human talents, and the better



wisdom of submitting the intellect, as well as the heart and the affections, to the simplicity of revealed truth.

Thus, before the termination of the third century, such a body of spiritual and allegorical interpretations had been accumulated, as to leave to subsequent expositors the power and opportunity of little more than actual repetition, or direct and obvious imitation. The principle was generally recognised as applicable to the Scriptures of the New as well as the Old Testament; and the chief alteration perhaps observable, as we advance, appears to be this, that the philosophical expositions are gradually either omitted, or so modified, as to harmonize more readily with the established faith of the church. As the *παράδοσεις* too became more copious, and more technically defined, the subjects, believed to lie concealed under the mysterious veil of the letter, naturally became somewhat more numerous <sup>q</sup>.

<sup>q</sup> Some remarkable instances of this, at a more modern period, will be found in the arguments of S. Javorski, opposed by Mosheim in his treatise “De pœnis “Hæreticorum.” (Diss. ad Sanct. Discipl. p. 435, &c.) Ja-

A very few examples will shew the practice to have prevailed in various ages with but little variation of character. In the fourth century, Eusebius, whose Evangelical Demonstration contains many expositions of this nature<sup>r</sup>, scruples not either to adduce them as legitimate proofs, or to seek for them even in the miracles of our Lord. Thus he regards the miracle of Cana as symbolical of the reception of those who dwell in Zebulun and Naphthali equally with the inhabitant and worshipper of Jerusalem: and in our Lord's walking upon the sea, he finds the type of his universal dominion over a world yet polluted by the presence of the evil spirit<sup>s</sup>. It appears to

vorski professed, and doubtless with truth, to speak the sentiments of the later Greek theologians.

<sup>r</sup> It should be stated both of this and the various other patristical works which are alluded to in this Lecture, that they generally contain, intermixed with this more questionable matter, many expositions of the typical and prophetical parts of Scripture more especially, to which the believer of the present day would find little reason for objecting.

<sup>s</sup> The sea is the universe; the great dragon, (perhaps the leviathan of rabbinical tradition,) which inhabits its deeps, is Satan.

have been usual with nearly all the commentators and preachers of these later ages, to consider the miraculous cures performed by our Lord as typical of the higher and spiritual benefits conferred by, or to be hoped for from his grace and Spirit. The well known Epiphanius sees in the resurrection of Lazarus the awakening of the soul from the sleep of sin, and the voice of the Saviour calling men from dead works to serve the living God<sup>t</sup>. Cyril of Alexandria teaches, that the ship which held the apostles is a symbol of the church of the faithful borne safely over the tempestuous ocean of the world<sup>u</sup>. It were an easy, but neither a pleasing nor a profitable task, to multiply instances of a character far more extravagant and objectionable than those which have been adduced<sup>v</sup>. And it will rea-

<sup>t</sup> Tom. iii. p. 372. ed. 1632.

<sup>u</sup> Comment. in Evang. S. Johan. c. 11.

<sup>v</sup> See Cosmas (ap. Whitby, *Stricturæ Patr.*) in *Matthæi*, c. 3. The commentary on the four evangelists, falsely ascribed to Theophilus of Antioch, abounds with expositions of the most fanciful kind. Its author regards the first five days of creation as typical of the Pentateuch; the sixth day, of the remainder of the Old Testament; the sabbath, of the Gospel.

dily be understood, that they who felt themselves at liberty thus to deal with the plain and intelligible contents of the New Testament, would scarcely be less fanciful and uncritical in their expositions of the Old: still the majority of those expositions were objectionable on these grounds alone. The θεωρία<sup>x</sup> (for this term had now been substituted for the γνῶσις of an earlier age) was made subservient, if not to the communication of doctrinal and historical knowledge, at least to the purposes of edification unto holiness. Nor does it appear just (however we may dissent from them) to accuse the great masters of this art, of incapacity, and impatience of all intellectual labour<sup>y</sup>. Howsoever the pride of modern learning may dogmatize on this point, it yet remains to be proved, that these mystical applications of the Scripture (however erroneous) did not require a mind of as high an order,

<sup>x</sup> V. Catenam Patr. in Job. p. 160. Not. Didymi, sub fine.

<sup>y</sup> It is almost the uniform practice of the German school to attribute all such expositions to the “sordida et pigritia hominum ecclesiasticorum.”

and as powerful an exertion of that mind, as the minuter details of verbal criticism.

He, for instance, who will even cursorily inspect the works of the pious and spiritual Macarius<sup>z</sup>, or even the homilies of the Alexandrian Cyril, especially if he will separate their spiritual deductions from the texts on which they are for the most part (I fully grant) unwarrantably grounded, may assuredly find matter for the exercise of the mind, and, under God's grace, for the improvement of the heart.

The general reception and popularity of this mode of interpretation appears to have produced, and perhaps in turn to have been augmented, by a very remarkable and voluminous forgery; originating most probably with the Alexandrian school early in the fourth century<sup>a</sup>; the fabrication and dispersion of several treatises bearing the well known name of Dionysius Areopa-

<sup>z</sup> Especially his homilies. Macarius flourished towards the end of the fourth century. He is highly praised by Mosheim, and was among the chief favourites of Poiret and Arndt. (V. Macarii Opuscula, ed. J. G. Pritius. Lipsiæ. Præfat. sub fine.) The homilies of Cyril, which I have inspected, are those on Jeremiah.

<sup>a</sup> See Buddeus, *Isagoge Hist. Theolog.* vol. i. p. 602.

gita. Those which remain to us, the treatises "On Mystical Theology," and on the "Celestial Hierarchy," abound in, and seem expressly written for the purpose of recommending the scheme of allegorical interpretation adopted by the Christian Platonists; like many other productions of that school, they exhibit occasionally (the former more especially) much of incoherence and obscurity. Such an authority however did their supposed origin obtain for them, that they were largely paraphrased and explained in the 7th century by Maximus, and in the 13th by Georgius Pachymeres<sup>b</sup>. A third work, now no longer extant, under the title of ὑποτυπώσεις θεολογικαὶ, was probably of the same mystical complexion<sup>c</sup>.

Nor was the practice of allegorical interpretation by any means exclusively confined to those who derived their philosophy from the schools of the later Platonists. The well known Athanasius uses it occasionally even as argumentative in his

<sup>b</sup> Their Commentaries are affixed to the edition of Paris, 1615.

<sup>c</sup> Dionys. Ar. Opp. p. 276. et Vit. S. D. cap. 6.



controversial writings<sup>d</sup>; though it should in justice be added, that his reasonings in those works are usually of a far different and more conclusive nature. Two of his shorter books, the Questions and Interpretations of Scripture, and the Questions, or rather Answers, to Autolycus, are occupied with scarcely any other matter. The explanations contained in them present but little either of novelty or plausibility, and are defended by the pretext, so constantly urged by earlier writers, that the literal sense of Scripture was frequently incompatible with the attributes and dignity of him who gave it<sup>e</sup>.

Others in the mean time, and among these we find the illustrious names of Basil, Gregory of Nazianzum, and the eloquent Chrysostom, although they do not appear to have questioned the validity of the allegorical system, nor even to have rejected altogether the philosophy with which Origen and his predecessors had associated that system, were yet more pru-

<sup>d</sup> This usage of the allegorical method may be traced in his work *De Communi Essentia*.

<sup>e</sup> Athanas. (ed. 1686.) vol. ii. p. 357.

dent and temperate in its practical application<sup>f</sup>. A third class, known to us but very partially from a few remaining fragments, and from the mention (not always a favourable one) made of them by later ecclesiastical writers, seem to have gone much further in their objection to this mode of exposition<sup>g</sup>; but as to the exact grounds or nature of those objections, we

<sup>f</sup> Of the first and second of these fathers, it is sufficient to state, that they are said to have compiled from the works of Origen that body of interpretative criticism, which is preserved to us under the name of *Philocalia*. Of Chrysostom, Buddeus (a most competent authority) says with justice, “*Sensui litterali, cum textum explicat, magis in-  
“ hæret quam ullus fere ejus ætatis commentator, nec  
“ tamen allegorias prorsus spernit; subinde Origenem se-  
“ quitur, sed ut caute evitet quæ in eo reprehendi so-  
“ lent.*” The perusal of nearly any one section of the *Catena Patrum in Job*, edited by Junius, will afford the student a ready and useful comparative view of the different methods of treating the same subject adopted by writers more or less addicted to the *θεωρία*. The extracts for instance from Chrysostom and from Didymus are strongly illustrative of this point. It is possible that Chrysostom may have derived his caution from the lessons which he received in the school of Antioch.

<sup>g</sup> Among these are usually reckoned Nepos, an Egyptian bishop of the third century, a millenarian, and author of a work entitled “*Ελεγχος Ἀλληγορίστων*, (see Buddeus, *Isagoge Hist. Theol.* vol. ii. 1292.); Eusebius Emisenus, Diodorus Tarsensis, and Julius Africanus; (see Ro-

are not enabled to speak with any degree of certainty. The most eminent of these literal expositors, Theodorus, bishop of Mopsuestia, appears to have been of a more acute and critical turn of mind than most of his contemporaries, and was not improbably tempted, by his distaste for the extravagant and untenable assertions of the allegorists, to somewhat of the opposite excess; and thus, like some hypercritical scholars of later date, to have withheld from many parts of Scripture that prophetic and typical character which justly belong to them. But though we may collect this to have been the general tone of his commentaries, we are still left, as to their details, in much, and perhaps irremediable obscurity.

senmuller, *Hist. Interpret.* :) and, above all, Theodorus of Mopsuestia, a writer represented to us under very different characters by different historians. See the learned and candid note of Buddeus. (*Isag.* vol. ii. p. 1404.) The four last mentioned writers are suspected of entertaining opinions similar to those which justly subjected Nestorius in the Greek, and Pelagius in the Latin church, to the charge of heresy. See also Bishop Munter's *Dissertation*, "De Schola Antiochena."

As we advance, we find the laborious and intelligent Theodoretus (the last name almost of note or eminence among those of the Greek church who applied themselves to the interpretation of Scripture) professing to hold the middle course, and censuring equally those who rejected and those who shewed an exclusive or undue partiality for the allegorical method. In his adoption, however, and usage of that method, he appears occasionally to have departed from the prudent caution of his own rule<sup>h</sup>. But learning, both secular and sacred, continued from this time<sup>i</sup> rapidly to decline; and the critical and historical investigation of the sacred text ceased to possess any commanding interest, either for the student, or the few readers whom in such an age he could expect to seek instruction from his labours. He therefore

<sup>h</sup> Rosenmuller (Hist. Interp.) has sufficiently established this point in his extracts from Theodoret's Com. in Psalm. if, that is, it be certain that the work is not falsely attributed to him: (conf. Buddeum, Isagog. p. 1409. who admits however that the Quæstiones in Genesim are chargeable with the same defect.)

<sup>i</sup> The middle of the fifth century.

usually confined himself to the humbler task of compiling and arranging the original materials afforded by his more favoured predecessors<sup>k</sup>. Where he ventured to add any thing from his own stores, he appears to have recurred largely, and without hesitation, to those treasures of sacred allegory, which, however uncritically, in some cases perhaps injuriously applied, were yet well adapted to arrest the attention and minister to the edification of his contemporaries<sup>l</sup>. Some few, who still affected the name and character of philosophers, retained probably, like the well known Synesius, with the doctrines of the later Pla-

<sup>k</sup> It is needless almost to say, that such was the origin of the *Catenæ Patrum*, well known to all biblical scholars. The more erudite indeed occasionally employed themselves also upon the useful task of perpetuating and explaining in their *γλῶσσαι* terms and phrases now rapidly becoming obsolete; but these labours could scarcely aspire to the praise of exegetical criticism.

<sup>l</sup> The student will find these observations confirmed by the inspection of the Commentaries left us by Theophylact, archbishop of Bulgaria in the eleventh century. That on the Gospels abounds with allegorical expositions; and whether (as some think) interpolated, or genuine, will equally serve to prove the taste of the age which produced it.

tonists, the mystical tone of scriptural exposition familiar to their school. But our materials for the history of biblical literature here become more scanty, and at the same time more unimportant. For the later writers of the eastern church, whatsoever might be their opinions or their merits, did not in fact continue, after the beginning of the sixth century, to exercise such an influence upon those of the western, as should render it necessary for our present purpose to pursue to any further extent the consideration of their labours.

Before however the present Lecture is concluded, it will be desirable to turn our attention for a short time to the traces of this method of interpretation observable in the writings of such Latin fathers, as flourished between the age of Tertullian and that of Jerome and Augustin. The variety and extent of the works remaining to us from the two latter, are well known to every one conversant with the history of theological literature; nor is it less generally understood and acknowledged, that to their decisions and opinions the whole



of the western church paid for many ages a nearly unlimited and unsuspecting deference. To the consideration therefore of that part of their exegetical labours which comes within the scope of our immediate subject, I propose to dedicate in the next Lecture as large a space as our limits will admit. For the present I would observe, that the Latin fathers who immediately succeeded to Tertullian, do not appear to have differed materially from the opinion or practice of their great predecessor, in affixing to many parts of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, a secondary and more exalted signification. Traces of this practice are discoverable in the treatises of the eloquent Lactantius<sup>m</sup>; and yet more frequently in those of the orthodox Cyprian. The latter does not scruple to use it as argumentative<sup>n</sup>, and apply it liberally to the establishment of the doctrines

<sup>m</sup> Rosenmuller has collected these. Hist. Interpret. sub nom.

<sup>n</sup> The reader may find in "Testim. contra Judæos" of Cyprian sufficient proofs of this assertion. See especially the mystical comments on the number seven, p. 238. (ed. 1726.) on Prov. ix. p. 285.

which he felt himself called upon to assert as to the unity and authority of the external church, in a manner which, however fairly it might be excused by the character of the age in which he lived, and the adversaries with whom he had to contend, afforded in after-times but too much countenance to the pretensions of his more secular and intolerant successors °.

But the most eminent remaining fathers, whom the western school of this period presents to our notice, as professed interpreters of Scripture, are, Hilary, bishop of Poitou, and Ambrose, bishop of Milan, towards the latter part of the fourth century. Both these, in their various expository treatises, followed the great allegorical teachers of the Alexandrian school; retrenching occasionally, and accommodating their mystical speculations to that stricter conformity with the *regula fidei* which the Latin church demanded; a demand in which we have already endeavoured to vindicate her from the charge of intolerance and narrowness

° P. 132. “Nota non erant,” observes his Romish editor, “ecclesiæ invisibilis commenta.”

of mind so liberally urged by some later theorists in religion. Thus Ambrose<sup>p</sup>, while he attaches to the description of paradise and to the history of our first parents a mystical explanation, the groundwork of which is originally derived from that of Philo, carefully testifies his faith in the literal text also<sup>q</sup>. In the same spirit he previously treats the Mosaic account of the creation, abstaining altogether from the ideal theory of the Alexandrian<sup>r</sup>. In the conversation of Cain and Abel, like Philo, he sees a type of the constant opposition of

<sup>p</sup> I confine myself to Ambrose, as having stood higher in the estimation, and consequently exercised greater influence on the expositions of his successors. Notices concerning Hilary may be found in Simon, *Hist. Crit.* V. T. lib. iii. cap. 10. Buddeus, *Isagoge*, vol. ii. p. 1388. and Rosenmuller, *Hist. Int.* The latter praises him with justice, for abstaining from a practice but too common with the fathers, that of urging the mystical sense as argumentative in controversial or doctrinal treatises.

<sup>q</sup> L. De Paradiso, c. 4. (ed. Paris. 1690.) See his censure on Philo, Lecture II. p. 47. note 5.

<sup>r</sup> Thus, “Terra ἀόρατος quia aquis cooperta—tenebræ “*reales* non malitiæ—In initio, *temporis*—Aquæ ac cœlum *realia*.”—(Hexaameron.) This whole dissertation has much of the natural history and philosophy of his age, but no traces of mysticism.

true and false doctrine; but yet rather, as he affirms, of that which exists between the synagogue and the church<sup>s</sup>. To the histories of Noah, of Abraham, Isaac, and other patriarchs, and to even the minutest details of those histories, he affixes similar interpretations, drawing their materials partly from Philo, and partly from a more Christian source<sup>t</sup>. In the person of Joseph, for instance, and in whatsoever befell that eminent servant of God, he finds types of the character, actions, and sufferings of our Redeemer<sup>u</sup>. “*Quis hæc legens*” (he asks in one case, and the remark is evidently meant to extend to all) “*terrena* “*magis quam spiritalia opera esse arbitratu<sup>x</sup>?*” And even in his treatise *De Fide*, where greater accuracy of proof would necessarily be required, he does not scruple to allegorize and misapply various portions, not only of the Psalms and Prophets, but

<sup>s</sup> De Cain et Abel, c. 2. In c. 3. he refers to the theory already noticed in Lecture III. p. 93. of the *συνύγία*.

<sup>t</sup> De Noe (the ark is here the type of man, from Philo) et De Isaac et Anima.

<sup>u</sup> De Josepho.

<sup>x</sup> De Isaac et Anima, c. 21.

even of the simple narrative. He makes in this case the usual apology of the mystic: "Historia simplex, sed alta mysteria, "aliud enim gerebatur, aliud figurabatur, "quia litteralis sensus indignus est<sup>y</sup>."

But the method and spirit of Origen, whom the learned Simon does not scruple to term the "bibliotheca Patrum<sup>z</sup>," were probably yet more familiarized to the western church through the translation of his works by Ruffinus and others, towards the commencement of the fifth century. The notions which that father derived from the Latin Platonists, the more objectionable of them at least, were not indeed at any time countenanced by, perhaps as literature declined were not altogether intelligible to, the stricter and more jealous theologians of the west. Their traces however remain sufficiently discernible in the works of those who have been distinctively termed the impurer mystics; and of some who yet mingled the pursuits of philosophy<sup>a</sup> ✓

<sup>y</sup> See De Fide, p. 69. et seq.

<sup>z</sup> Hist. Crit. V. T. lib. 3.

<sup>a</sup> They may be traced in various bodies of natural and intellectual philosophy, composed, or rather com-

with those of religion. While his example, in allegorizing the whole body of Scripture, and the stores which his voluminous works afforded for transcription and imitation, contributed most powerfully and widely to authorize and to facilitate the practice even among those, who upon all points of theological or philosophical inquiry adhered most rigidly to the doctrines and decisions of the church.

The course of our examination has now brought us nearly to the middle of the fifth century ; a period, (it has been already noticed,) after which the authority of the few writers who contributed any thing of consequence to the instruction or edification of the eastern church, was confined exclusively to the members of their own communion ; in no case, that I am aware, extending to or affecting the opinions of the far more numerous and important body of piled, during the middle ages. To take one prominent instance ; the notion that man was not only a type of the spiritual and material universe, but, as containing a portion of the respective elements of each, an actual compendium and model of the whole (a microcosm) is to be found in nearly every writer of this character, from Philo in the first, to the mystic Fludd in the seventeenth century.



Christians, who, adhering to that of the east, acknowledged the supremacy, and submitted more or less implicitly to the dictates of the Romish see.

As we shall therefore have no further occasion to notice the tenets or methods of interpretation prevalent in the Greek church, I may be permitted once more, before we entirely quit this part of our subject, to recur to that peculiar mixture of human philosophy with revealed truth, which gave a distinctive feature to the doctrinal and expository labours of so many among the most learned and eloquent of her members.

To assert that no portion of the higher light derived from the Gospel mingled itself with their speculations, or that the bulk of their mystical comments (however little deducible from the texts to which they affixed them) was not, according to their own view of those truths, made to bear upon the great practical and spiritual truths of religion, were both uncandid and untrue. To the common Saviour of all mankind, the philosophical professor un-

doubtedly looked for the restitution and purification of his spiritual nature. In the cause of that Saviour he was content, equally with the more humble believer, to spend and to be spent. Of the Christian faith, therefore, and the Christian intentions of such men, it little becomes us to speak in the language of doubt or depreciation ; but as to the value of their philosophical creed, and the wisdom and safety of applying that creed to the interpretation of Scripture, we are assuredly at liberty to use our own judgment. That they were ingenious and learned, as the learning of the times went, beyond the majority of those who rejected their hypotheses, we may concede ; but the very first principles of the philosophy which they loved were, even in its best and earliest age, highly obscure, and rather laid down authoritatively and dogmatically, than proved by any regular process of inductive or analogical reasoning. In some cases they were opposed to, and in yet more uncoun- tenanced by, the express declarations of Scripture ; and the applying them to the interpretation of that Scripture was, there-

fore, upon any grounds, either critical or moral, altogether unjustifiable. But the most reprehensible feature of their school was assuredly this, that their whole expository system, so far from rendering the Gospel accessible to those to whom it was expressly preached, so far from applying all inspired Scripture to the general purposes of reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, for which it was given, had an express tendency to load its study with imaginary and unnecessary difficulties, to represent its heavenly truths as perceptible in all their greatness and glory only by a few highly intellectual and studious persons, and thus to draw between the speculative scholar and the humble and ingenuous believer, a line which was not always warranted by the spiritual and Christian advancement of the one, or inferiority of the other.

From this defect the earlier Latin church appears to have been much more free ; and I cannot but think that her stricter adherence to the *regula fidei*, however mischievously and injuriously exaggerated in more

corrupt ages, or uncandidly depreciated in our own, had in this point an effect unquestionably beneficial.

For ourselves, we have experienced and do experience daily the value of such a standard, without the danger of its usurping the place of that Scripture, which it is its legitimate province only to interpret and to subserve; while from the intellectual self-sufficiency of the Alexandrian we may be, and are, I trust, preserved, by the certain conviction, that growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, is not of necessity commensurate or connected with a progress in the studies even most immediately allied to our Christian profession.

Let it be then, in this place more especially, our prayer and our endeavour, that, while we give all diligence to the latter, we may be made partakers of and preserved in the former: and do thou, O Father of lights, grant that which we ask, and work in us and sanctify that which we do, to the glory of thy name, and the salvation of thy creatures.

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## LECTURE V.

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PSALM lxxviii. 2.

*I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old.*

IN the former portions of these Lectures it was attempted to trace the opinions entertained as to the secondary or spiritual sense of the holy Scriptures, and the methods observed for its discovery and application: in the Greek church, until that period when she ceased to retain any extensive or material influence over the general faith of Christendom; in the Latin, until that which produced the most admired and valuable of her doctrinal and practical theologians, Jerom and Augustin.

The unquestionable learning of the one, and the piety and eloquence of both these eminent persons; the copiousness and variety of their labours, and, above all, their

appearance in an age when the natural course of events tended to produce, in a church now fully established and defended against her adversaries by the secular as well as by the spiritual arm, an increasing and more unsuspecting, or at least more unresisting deference for prescription and authority, combined to give to their opinions and decisions an influence and a popularity, unequalled perhaps by those of any other theological writers, of whatever age or country.

That of these two, Jerom was by several years the senior,<sup>a</sup> and that his labours were chiefly directed to the critical and historical interpretation of Scripture, every biblical student is well aware<sup>b</sup>. It is not however with either these invaluable contributions to sacred literature, or with such of his remains as are of a controversial nature, that we are at present concerned. To hasten therefore to the more immediate

<sup>a</sup> According to Cave, Jerom was born A. D. 329. and Augustin, A. D. 355.

<sup>b</sup> It is hardly needful to state, that a catalogue of his voluminous works will be found in Cave.



object of these Lectures: it will be found upon inspection of the exegetical works of this pious and laborious father, that in his views of the admissibility and limitation of the allegorical method, he treads closely in the footsteps of those whom we have already noticed as rejecting the admixture of human philosophy with revealed truth<sup>c</sup>. Reprobating, as they did, that licence of interpretation which admitted and proposed as the "*sacramenta ecclesiæ*," (I use his own expression<sup>d</sup>;) theories and imaginations of mere human origin; and restricting the materials of all allegorical exposition to those spiritual or moral truths already confirmed by the explicit language and tenor of holy writ, and accepted by the universal church, yet, so limited, he fully allows its use and value. In his opinion of the circumstances which more im-

<sup>c</sup> See the Epistles to Avitus (n. 59.) and to Pammachius and Oceanus, (64;) the *Apologia* adv. Ruffinum, and the Preface to the Commentary on Isaiah, c. 13. Origen is probably the "*delirus interpres*" alluded to in the Commentary on Jeremiah, c. 29. Note, "*Quia hæc dicit Dominus.*"

<sup>d</sup> Comm. on Isaiah xiii. as above.

peratively call for and justify its application, he coincides with all his predecessors : “ Ubi materia vel turpitudinem habeat, vel  
“ impossibilitatem, ad altiora transmitti-  
“ mur<sup>e</sup>.” Nor does he scruple to find sufficient reason for its application in much of the New as well as of the Old Testament. The vague and uncritical nature indeed of a canon, which, proscribing all that might be held unworthy or improbable in the literal sense, left that unworthiness or improbability to be decided upon by the sole pleasure of the expositor, is sufficiently evident; nor can we be surprised that it opposed no effectual barrier to the excesses of a lively imagination, and to the yet more dangerous taste for depreciating and disregarding the obvious and real meaning of the inspired writers. Jerom, however, not only believed this practice to be justifiable on the grounds of its tendency to Christian edification, but defends it as prescribed by the very letter of Scripture. In quoting the words of the

<sup>e</sup> In Matth. c. xxi. Note, “ Hoc autem factum est.”

Psalmist, chosen for our text, he urges that they sufficiently prove the typical and symbolical nature of all that befell the Israelites: “*Ex quo intelligimus universa quæ scripta sunt parabolice sentienda, nec manifestum tantum sonare litteram, sed abscondita sacramenta<sup>f</sup>.*” It must nevertheless be admitted, that his mystical interpretations are rarely or never so proposed as to insinuate any disbelief of the actual history; and that he occasionally at least prescribes some just and reasonable limits to the practice of those who were anxious to be wise above that which is written. Thus in commenting on the parable of the sower, “*Cavendum est*” (he urges) “*ubi Dominus exponit parabolas suas, ne vel aliud nec plus quid velimus intelligere, quam ab eo expositum est.*” So in explaining the rebukes addressed to the Jewish priesthood and people, through the prophet Malachi; “*Regula Scripturarum est,*” (he affirms,) “*ubi manifestissima prophetia de futuris textitur, per incerta*

<sup>f</sup> Comm. in Matt. xiii. Note, “*Ut impleretur.*”

“*allegoriæ non extenuare quæ scripta sunt*.” Where too he draws, as he does frequently and copiously, from the stores of his predecessors, he is careful in many cases so to modify their spiritual and moral deductions, as to render them more consistent with the general and obvious tenor of the Scriptures, and the dictates of Christian judgment and sobriety. This will be readily seen by the comparison of his commentary on any portion almost of the Gospel with that of Origen. That he does not exhibit the vivid fancy and the occasional eloquence of that powerful writer is assuredly true; but he will be found, unless I am much mistaken, more intelligible, more reasonable, and more practically useful. Still desirable and sensible as are the restrictions which Jerom occasionally lays down on this head, and wisely as he abstained from all which partook of the impurer mysticism; the extent to which he indulged in that variety of allegorical interpretation, which he thought legitimate,

§ See also the Preface to Malachi, and the note, “*Et descendit,*” on Jonah, c. i.

and free from all chance of perversion and danger, was such as no sober-minded or intelligent expositor of either Testament could now regard without suspicion. Sufficient evidence to this purpose may be derived from even a cursory inspection of his commentaries on any portion of the inspired writings; and yet more readily perhaps from that of a treatise well calculated to give a correct notion of the principles and general tone of his expositions; the treatise, namely, addressed to Fabiola, concerning the forty-two stations or resting-places occupied by the Jewish host during their journey through the wilderness<sup>h</sup>.

I abstain from adducing any individual instances of the mystical expositions, either more or less plausible, which are to be found in almost every page of his writings; partly because, from their general similarity to those already quoted from other sources, their introduction might seem tedious, (a defect, I am sensibly aware, almost inseparable from the details of an inquiry

<sup>h</sup> De 42 Mansionibus ad Fabiolam.

like the present ;) and partly because, as we advance, it becomes more and more difficult to pronounce with certainty upon the original source of any given comment or explanation whatsoever<sup>i</sup>. I would state only, that, apparently in contradiction to his own principles, he does not scruple, any more than most of his predecessors, to attach an argumentative and doctrinal value to the allegorical sense; and that for the inconsistency and inaccuracy which he frequently manifests on this and on other points he has himself left upon record, that which, if it does not justify, at least fully accounts for them. He complains, in language which presents a lively image of the habits and character in all probability common to himself with many others of the same class, that the number and variety of his avocations obliged him to write, or ra-

<sup>i</sup> See Preface to Galatians; though elsewhere he appears to hold that it is not of argumentative value. Comm. in Matth. cap. 13. “*Pius quidem sensus,*” (he observes of the expositors who saw in the three measures of meal, mentioned at ver. 33, a symbol of the Trinity,) “*sed* “*nunquam parabolæ et dubia ænigmatum intelligentia* “*potest ad auctoritatem dogmatum proficere.*”



ther to dictate, whole treatises in a state of hurry and confusion, which allowed no time for previous consideration or subsequent revision <sup>k</sup>. It should not be forgotten however, that he pleads, in further extenuation of the imperfections of which he was himself conscious, that which it is to be hoped that no one can plead unsuccessfully, the impediments and pressure of failing health and bodily infirmities. Still we may be permitted to regret, that the powers of his mind, a mind assuredly of no common order, were not applied rather to the discrimination and selection, we may add to the perspicuous and logical arrangement, of his materials, than to the more elementary labour of accumulating and committing them to memory. Defects which may be excusable, nay, in many cases may not act as material drawbacks upon the practical and hortatory province of our sacred office, assume a much less defensible character, when we appear as the professed critical and doctrinal expositors of the book of life.

<sup>k</sup> See the Prefaces to the Commentaries on St. Matthew, and on Galatians, lib. 1. et 3.

With the name of Jerom, that of Augustin is, as I have suggested, almost naturally associated by every one at all conversant in theological history. Inferior to Jerom in erudition only, Augustin was, in the arts of reasoning, in imagination, in eloquence, in the power of delineating and enforcing Christian principles and feelings, unquestionably his superior. He exhibits however the same defects occasionally perhaps in a yet more striking degree than his great contemporary. It were easy to discover and point out in many of his voluminous writings, evident traces of the inaccuracy, and even inconsistency, hardly perhaps separable from the extreme facility and rapidity with which they appear to have been produced. That for such a temperament in such an age, that spiritual exposition of Scripture, the validity of which had perhaps in the Latin church (so long as its authors insinuated nothing contrary to her accredited rule of faith) been altogether unquestioned, should possess even more than its accustomed attractions, we cannot wonder. In one of the most carefully and

systematically written of his treatises, the book “De Doctrina Christiana,” he dedicates several chapters to the consideration of its necessity, value, and proper application. The former he asserts in the strongest terms: “In<sup>1</sup> principio cavendum est ne “figuratam locutionem ad litteram accipias; “ad hoc enim pertinet quod ait apostolus, “*Littera occidit, Spiritus autem vivificat.*” And this attachment to the bare letter he stigmatizes as what, when carried to its most ignorant and superstitious extent, we also should scarcely hesitate to term it, a miserable and more than Jewish servitude<sup>m</sup>. “Signa pro rebus accipere et supra creaturam corpoream oculum mentis ad hauri-

<sup>1</sup> Lib. iii. sect. 9. Compare lib. ii. ss. 24, 25. On account chiefly of the high authority of Augustin as a spiritual teacher, I prefer the giving his opinion in his own words.

<sup>m</sup> With respect to the Israelites themselves, Augustin appears to have held, that whilst under the tutelage of the Law, they had generally no insight into its spiritual meaning. “Nescientes quo (signa Legis) referrentur.” Lib. iii. sect. 10. In sect. 13. however he expressly excepts the patriarchs, prophets, and inspired writers from this universal blindness. In both cases perhaps he has over-stated the condition of the parties.

“endum æternum lumen levare non posse.” In the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament he permits the application of the allegorical method on the grounds so often adduced from others. “Quidquid in  
 “sermone divino neque ad morum hones-  
 “tatem, neque ad fidei veritatem proprie  
 “referri potest, figuratum esse cognoscas.”  
 “Non enim præcipit Scriptura nisi carita-  
 “tem, non culpat nisi cupiditatem.” “Non  
 “asserit nisi catholicam fidem rebus præ-  
 “teritis, et futuris, et præsentibus<sup>n</sup>.” Thus he seems disposed at least to regard some parts of Scripture as either altogether allegorical, or at least in their first intention (as in the case of the penitent, who anointed the feet of our Lord with that which under common circumstances might better have

<sup>n</sup> L. iii. sect. 14, 15. It should be observed, that he uses the words “caritas et cupiditas” in the most extensive sense. “Caritatem voco motum animi ad fruendum Deo  
 “propter ipsum et se atque proximo propter Deum;  
 “cupiditatem autem motum animi ad fruendum se et  
 “proximo et quolibet corpore non propter Deum.” (Sect. 16.) Augustin nowhere (as far as I have examined his writings) rejects the historical sense, however trifling his reasons may occasionally be for engrafting a secondary one on it. See *De Civ. Dei*, lib. xv. c. 27.

been sold and given to the poor) evidently typical. But the student will observe, that even his general rules are wanting in perspicuity, and his illustrations frequently insufficient and unsatisfactory. With respect to the Old Testament, he affirms, that the whole, “omnia vel pæne omnia,” has a spiritual as well as proper and primary meaning<sup>o</sup>; and defends strongly those who attached more than one sense to the same passage. “Ille quippe auctor in eisdem verbis, “quæ intelligere volumus, et ipsam sententiam forsitan vidit, et certe Dei Spiritus “qui per eum hæc operatus est, etiam ipsam “occursuram lectori vel auditori, sine dubitatione prævidit, immo ut occurreret, “quia et ipsa est veritate subnixa” (I have already stated that the general rule and analogy of the Christian faith was prescribed as the standard and limitation of such expositions) “*providit*<sup>n</sup>!” Augustin adds indeed to these canons, if they may

<sup>o</sup> Sect. 32. Yet he afterwards objects to the like excess on the part of another writer, (Tichonius.) See sect. 43.

<sup>p</sup> Sect. 38.

so be termed, some few cautions and limitations as to the discovery and application of the mystical sense, as it affected either single words and objects<sup>q</sup>, or the more general tenor of the inspired writings. Thus he urges with truth, that the same expression is at different times figuratively applied to objects of a different moral or spiritual character<sup>r</sup>, that assuredly those preceptive parts of Scripture which enjoin the good, and forbid the evil, are to be understood positively, and not figuratively<sup>s</sup>; and that the offences of the eminent characters whose memory is preserved in Scripture, are not to be considered as furnishing matter of example or excuse to the Christian. His statement of this subject may serve, among many others, to shew that the fathers have been partially and unjustly accused of holding a lax and imperfect standard of morality<sup>t</sup>.

But his cautions and limitations are at times so trivial and obvious, that we can scarcely conceive them to have been needed

<sup>q</sup> Sectt. 35, 36.   <sup>r</sup> Sect. 35.   <sup>s</sup> Sect. 24.   <sup>t</sup> Sectt. 32, 33.



even in his own age, and on the whole as insufficient (critically estimated) as his general theory of spiritual interpretation is untenable. Still, both in prescribing its rules to others, and in his own application of that theory, he rarely loses sight of that principle which we have already alluded to as a powerful safeguard against moral, if not against critical errors. “*Quisquis Scripturas divinas vel quamlibet earum partem intellexisse sibi videtur, ita ut eo intellectu non ædificet caritatem Dei et proximi, nondum intellexit. Quisquis vero talem inde sententiam duxerit, ut huic ædificandæ caritati sit utilis, nec tamen hoc dixerit, quod ille quem legit eo loco sensisse probabitur, non perniciose fallitur, nec omnino mentitur.*”

In those works which he dedicated more immediately to the interpretation of Scripture, Augustin seems indeed to place scarcely any other boundary than this to the indulgence of his imagination. Many of these however appear to have been rather of the nature of homiletical addresses to the congregation, than direct commentaries on the

sacred text. “Hæc omnia,” he says expressly of one of his largest works, the Exposition of the Psalms, “in homiliis ad populum prolata sunt<sup>u</sup>.” The whole of these, as well as the greater part of the historical books of the Old Testament, Augustin appears to regard as having been understood by the Israelites themselves in their primary and literal sense alone, “ad tempus temporaliter intellecta sunt,” but to have involved universally a second sense, of a prophetic as well as spiritual nature<sup>x</sup>. He grounds this assertion, erroneous perhaps in the extent only of its application, upon a text which evidently bears no such meaning as that which he would affix to it, “Cantate Domino canticum novum—Vetus homo cantat vetus canticum<sup>y</sup>, novus, novum<sup>z</sup>.” The applicability of each Psalm<sup>a</sup> to the person, the history, or the spiritual

<sup>u</sup> Præf. ad Ps. cxviii.

<sup>x</sup> Not. in Ps. cxlix.

<sup>y</sup> Legem sc.

<sup>z</sup> Evangelium sc.

<sup>a</sup> Jerom is said to have objected to his totally overlooking the literal and historical sense of the Psalms. (V. Sextini Amamae Antibar. Bibl. p. 444.)

kingdom of our blessed Redeemer, he gathers usually from the mystical import of the titles prefixed to each; titles, the age and origin of which are, in the opinion of the best biblical scholars, by no means free from suspicion. Thus the title of the fourth Psalm, "In finem, Psalmus Cantici David," is explained with reference to our Saviour as the fulfilment of the Law, "Finitis legis Christus—Hic aut verba Domini hominis<sup>b</sup> post resurrectionem expectamus, aut hominis in ecclesia credentis, et sperantis in eo." Adhering chiefly to the latter of these expositions, he explains the greater part of this, as of the following Psalm also, (the title of which, "Pro ea quæ accepit hæreditatem," he refers to the church of the faithful,) in a manner not only unobjectionable on moral grounds, but highly conducive to Christian edification. The same remark will apply to almost every part of the exegetical labours of Augustin which I have had the opportunity of consulting. His critical defects are obvious and glaring; but he who is insensi-

<sup>b</sup> Christi sc.

ble to the beauty, the piety, and the devotional and spiritual feeling which are to be found in almost every page of his Commentaries, must be, to say no more, both fastidious and uncandid.

With the much and unhappily agitated question which concerns the opinions peculiar, or supposed to be peculiar to Augustin, we are not at present concerned. It may be permitted me however to observe, that many among those who have been disposed perhaps to pride themselves, and that not altogether without reason, on the name and authority of this eminent Christian, would have done well to imitate the prudence with which he abstains from mixing up questions of so lofty and obscure a character with his spiritual and practical instructions. I shall be readily pardoned for adding one example of his plain, simple, and scriptural manner of announcing that which is unquestionably the record of his Master. “*Novit Dominus qui sunt ejus ;*  
“*Christianos timentes, Christianos fideles,*  
“*Christianos præcepta servantes, in Dei*  
“*viis ambulantes, a peccatis abstinentes,*

“ si ceciderint confitentes, ipsi ad *numerum* “ pertinent <sup>z</sup>.”

Besides the critical defects so frequently noticed as inseparable from the patristical theories of the spiritual and allegorical sense, it must be admitted that Augustin and his contemporaries did occasionally err in applying the sacred text mystically as well as literally to the doctrines and traditions of a church now rapidly declining from her original purity. But this was an error arising not so much out of the practice of allegorical exposition itself, as from the excess and depravation of the standard by which it was defined and limited. It should be added, that on one point, assuredly the most objectionable among those maintained by the Latin church of after-ages, a point too in which her example was but too frequently imitated by those who professed a purer faith, Augustin has clearly expressed an opinion more consonant to the temper of the gospel of

<sup>z</sup> Comm. in Ps. xxxix. 5. The whole exposition of this Psalm is a favourable specimen of Augustin's manner.

peace. In his comment on the 149th Psalm, even where he is urging with considerable warmth and vehemence the difference between the Latin church and those whom she considered as heretics, he carefully attaches a spiritual sense to the sentence, "Frameæ bis acutæ in manibus sanctorum." "Ne vere tu putares homines ferro percuti." And one would expect indeed, one would hope at least, that intolerant and uncharitable feelings could scarcely obtain any strong or permanent hold in the mind of one who felt so deeply, and inculcated so zealously, the necessity and value of that inward and spiritual life, by which the believer liveth in Christ to God; one who so constantly urged, that the promises were spiritually given to the inward and spiritual church. "Ecclesia quippe," (as he urges in words which at once convey his opinion, and its mystical application to many passages of the Old Testament;) "Ecclesia quippe sine macula et ruga ex omnibus gentibus, congregata atque in æternum regnatura cum Christo, ipsa est terra



“ beatorum, terra viventium, ipsa intelligenda est Patribus data <sup>a</sup>. ”

In the treatise so largely referred to, “ *Doctrina Christiana*, ” Augustin has noticed at some length an attempt made shortly before his own age by Tichonius, a writer attached to the austere and fanatic opinions of the Donatistæ, to lay down and arrange in a more intelligible and systematic manner than had hitherto been done, the legitimate rules of mystical and spiritual interpretation. The work of Tichonius, “ *Liber Regularum* <sup>b</sup>, ” is still extant ; and, though obscure and unsatisfactory, should not be passed entirely without notice. He appears to have carried his notions as to the extent, or rather universality, if I may so say, of the mystical sense to an excess, which even Augustin could not approve. “ *Sunt quædam regulæ mysticæ*, ” he affirms, “ *quæ universæ legis recessus obtinent, et veritatis thesauros aliquibus invisibiles visibiles faciunt, quarum si ratio*

<sup>a</sup> See *Doct. Chr. lib. iii. c. 49.* Compare *c. 45.*

<sup>b</sup> It may be found in the *Bibliotheca Max. Patrum*, and in the *Scripta Orthodoxographa* of Grynæus.

“ sine invidia, ut communicamus, accepta  
 “ fuerit clausa quæque patefient et obscura  
 “ dilucidabuntur<sup>c</sup>.” The rules, or rather the divisions, under which Tichonius arranges his materials, are in number seven, and relate chiefly to the spiritual and typical manner in which our Lord and his church on the one hand, and the open enemies or false and unworthy members of that church on the other, are shadowed out in various parts of Scripture, to the more general or extensive application of that which is written specifically, or with apparent reference to individuals only, and to the literal or mystical explanation of numbers, times, and seasons. His work however cannot be regarded as approaching even to a systematic or comprehensive view

<sup>c</sup> I add the original enumeration of these rules:—  
 R. 1. De Domino et ejus Corpore (*Ecclesia*.) 2. De Domini Corpore bipartito (*in Christianos veros et simulatos*.) 3. De Promissis et Lege. 4. De Specie et Genere. (This is perhaps, with reference to our present subject, the most interesting section of his work.) 5. De Temporibus. 6. De Recapitulatione. (This is rather critical than allegorical.) 7. De Diabolo et ejus Corpore (*malis et infidelibus*.)

of the question on which it bears; and there is in its execution so much of confusion and obscurity, that the student may safely content himself with the abstract given by Augustin. If he find in that abstract an occasional want of perspicuity, his difficulties will hardly be removed or lessened by the perusal of the original. We may be permitted perhaps to regret, that none of the earlier and more learned fathers of the church should have left us any more specific and systematic enumeration of the laws and principles by which they were guided in their invention and application of allegorical expositions; but in this deficiency it would scarcely repay the labour, if indeed it were practicable within the limits of these discourses, to enter upon the details of a subject so full of intricacy and uncertainty. In endeavouring to trace the general outline and character of the allegorical method, as it was practised in different ages of the church, some leading principles, which appear to have been almost universally accepted as the legitimate

κανόνες ἀλληγορίας, have from time to time been noticed. In addition to these it may be mentioned, that the mystical writers of these earlier ages, like many of their imitators in more modern times, attached much importance to the etymological signification of the Hebrew proper names of individuals, places, and the like, found either in the Old or New Testament; that the secret meaning and value of numbers formed another branch of their investigations; and that, lastly, in affixing certain and definite spiritual significations to the words and phrases most frequently recurring in Holy Writ, they appear (if this phenomenon be not the result of mere transcription and imitation) to have followed somewhat approaching to a consistent and regular system. Extreme and rigorous accuracy, either in the construction or application of such a system, could not, from the very nature of the case, be expected from them: but that some general analogies were defined, and usually observed, will be sufficiently obvious to any one who is curious

to pursue this branch of theological criticism into its minuter details<sup>d</sup>.

During the ages immediately succeeding to that of Jerom and Augustin, the history of spiritual, and we may add of scriptural interpretation in general presents but little either of novelty or of interest. In proportion indeed as the decline of learning and the encroachments of ignorance and barbarism cut off from the theological student the means and resources of critical and historical exposition, his attention was of necessity turned more powerfully and exclusively to that which related, or was supposed to relate, to the practical and spiritual life of the Christian; and if his notions of the former degenerated but too frequently into a blind and burdensome

<sup>d</sup> A very singular and, I apprehend, scarce volume, highly calculated to illustrate this part of our subject, has fallen under my observation, almost while committing these pages to the press, the *Sylva Allegoriarum* of Hieronymus Lauretus, first printed at Barcelona, in fol. A.D. 1570. (again, Coloniae Agrip. 1612. and again, Venice, —.) This laborious work presents, under the form of a dictionary, a most copious synopsis of the secondary meanings attached by mystical writers of the middle as well as the earlier ages to the language of Scripture.

superstition, and his aspirations after the latter were mingled with but too much of a more questionable and earthly character, these defects were attributable rather to the temper of the age, and the general corruption of the church, than to any thing necessarily connected with that mystical interpretation of Scripture which now offered the only accessible field for his inquiries and labours. In these speculations, on the contrary, it cannot fairly be doubted but that many a retired and humble Christian found no inconsiderable or unprofitable aliments of a faith and piety, mistaken indeed upon many points, but yet sufficient, we trust, to draw the mind from the things of time, and to elevate and attach it to those of eternity.

In reviewing this period of increasing darkness and degeneracy, the student will find the celebrated Cassiodorus<sup>e</sup>, and the pontiff Gregory<sup>f</sup>, treading closely in the

<sup>e</sup> See Rosenmuller, sub nomine.

<sup>f</sup> The extracts especially given by Rosenmuller from the Commentaries of Gregory on Job, shew that they much resembled those of Jerom. See also Buddeus



steps of Ambrose, Jerom, and Augustin; the latter especially, adding to a credulity and weakness but too obvious, no small portion of humble and spiritual feeling. Neither should it be unnoticed that our own country produced, in the persons of Bede and Alcuin, the two most learned and accomplished scriptural expositors of their age. The former of these, in his treatises on various books of the Old Testament, indulges in the fullest latitude of allegorical interpretation, accumulating or imitating the mystical fancies of his predecessors to an excess which it seems difficult to reconcile with his usual prudence and judgment<sup>g</sup>. The opinion indeed which he expresses as to the apocryphal book of Tobit may be regarded as extending to the whole volume of the elder covenant; “*Siquis eundem allegorice novit interpretari,*

Isag. pp. 1409, &c. Gregory was termed by R. Rapin, “*Philosophus per Allegorias,*” Buddeus, p. 578.

<sup>g</sup> See his *Hexameron* and *Comment. in Genesin*. He follows Jerom in affixing a mystical sense to the book of Proverbs. His other authorities appear to be Ambrose, Augustin, Gregory, and, in the Acts, the Christian poet Arator.

“ quantum poma foliis, tantum interiorem  
 “ ejus sensum videt simplicitati litteræ  
 “ præstare <sup>h</sup>.” The commentaries of Bede  
 on the New Testament, though not entirely  
 exempt from this imputation, are ad-  
 mitted to be for the most part of a far  
 more judicious and practical character. “ It  
 “ is sufficiently evident,” (I quote the opi-  
 nion of a writer by no means to be sus-  
 pected of partiality,) “ It is sufficiently evi-  
 “ dent that Bede might have achieved far

<sup>h</sup> The following quotation given by Rosenmuller affords  
 a singular picture both of the author’s mind, and of the  
 facility with which the grounds of defence usually urged  
 for the mystical exposition were accommodated to the  
 existing state of the church. “ Si vetera tantummodo  
 “ de thesauro Scripturarum proferre, hoc est, solas li-  
 “ teræ figuras sequi Judaico more curamus, quid inter  
 “ quotidiana peccata *correctionis*, inter crebrescentes æ-  
 “ rumnas sæculi *consolationis*, inter innumeros vitæ hu-  
 “ jus errores *spiritualis doctrinæ*, legentes vel audientes  
 “ acquirimus. Dum v. g. Elcanam virum unum duas  
 “ uxores habuisse reperimus; nos maxime, quibus ec-  
 “ clesiasticæ vitæ consuetudine longe fieri ab uxoris  
 “ complexu et cælibes manere propositum est, si non  
 “ etiam de his et hujusmodi dictis allegoricum noveri-  
 “ mus exsculpere sensum, qui vivaciter interius casti-  
 “ gando, erudiendo, consolando reficit, quid legentes vel  
 “ audientes acquirimus?” Elcanah is accordingly made  
 to typify our Lord; and his two wives, the synagogue  
 and the church.

“ more than he actually did, had not he  
 “ fallen upon an age in which it was es-  
 “ teemed the highest praise of the com-  
 “ mentator to tread in the footsteps and  
 “ compile the opinions of previous author-  
 “ ities. Credit is at least due to him for  
 “ diligence, for copious erudition, and for a  
 “ knowledge of the Greek language, in that  
 “ day so rare as to be nearly obsolete in  
 “ the church of the Latins<sup>i</sup>.” Corrupted  
 as the general doctrines and practices of  
 that church had now become, I should he-  
 sitate to affirm that the taste which the  
 writings and example of the venerable  
 presbyter produced among his contempora-  
 ries and successors for the spiritual appli-  
 cation of Scripture (however defective in  
 critical principle) was other than benefi-  
 cial. Where they had the means and op-  
 portunity, it appears that neither Bede nor  
 the learned and enlightened Alcuin<sup>k</sup> (for

<sup>i</sup> V. Rosenmuller, ubi supra.

<sup>k</sup> “ Fuit Alcuinus doctior plerisque sui ævi scriptori-  
 “ bus.” “ Ejus cura, consiliis ac institutione scholæ in  
 “ Germania a Carolo fundatæ, monachique a pristina ig-  
 “ navia ac inertia revocati sunt, *ut litteras restaurasse in*  
 “ *Germania merito censeatur.*” Rosenmuller. See also

so in truth he well deserves, with reference to the age which produced him, to be considered) neglected the cultivation of such other branches of sacred literature, as were more immediately necessary for preserving the integrity and establishing the true signification of the inspired text<sup>1</sup>. Nor did their love for the allegorical method tend to shake their faith in the historical narration: “Prius,” urges Alcuin, “historiæ  
“fundamenta ponenda sunt, ut aptius allegoriæ  
“culmen priori structuræ superponetur.” In this prudent and necessary caution they do not appear to have been altogether imitated by one, who was perhaps their superior in learning, and whose biblical labours acquired, directly or indirectly, much more of popularity and influ-

a detailed character of Alcuin in Mr. S. Turner’s learned and interesting History of the Anglo-Saxons.

<sup>1</sup> Bede endeavours frequently to explain the received text by reference to the original Greek; and in his exposition of the Epistles, unfolds and illustrates, not unsuccessfully, (according to Rosenmuller,) the apostolic arguments. Alcuin undertook, at the express command of Charlemagne, the revision and correction of the Latin Vulgate.

ence in the schools of theology ; Rhabanus Maurus <sup>m</sup>. This writer, who flourished during the former part of the ninth century, is one of the few by whom any specific treatise was dedicated to the subject of our present inquiries. His work, entitled “ Liber Allegoriarum,” presents, under the form of an alphabetical arrangement, a very interesting, though still incomplete synopsis of the figurative and mystical significations attached by the universal consent of his church to the words and expressions of the prophets and apostles <sup>n</sup>. His interpreta-

<sup>m</sup> “ In quibusdam locis solum exquirendam esse allegoriam neglecta historia putavit.” Rosenmuller, sub nomine. From the Commentaries of R. Maurus his scholar, Walafrid Strabo compiled the Glossa Ordinaria ; a work which acquired such celebrity as to be quoted by P. Lombard simply as the “ auctoritas !” It may be here added that the same allegorical taste is said by Rosenmuller to distinguish the Glossa Interlinearis first compiled by Anselm of Laudun, c. A. D. 1100. One specimen from the Glossa Ord. will shew its character. “ *Misit digitos in aurem ejus.*” “ Per Spiritum Sanctum aures cordis aperit.” Apud T. Aquinat. Serm. De Dominico 12 post Pentec.

<sup>n</sup> His work is far inferior, for instance, both in bulk and completeness, to that of H. Lauretus, mentioned above. Rhabanus omits to mention the original sources

tion of Scripture metaphors is frequently unobjectionable, and his more extensive applications of the spiritual sense offend rather against the laws of sound interpretation, than against the feelings of Christian principle, or the purity of Christian doctrine°. To the indulgence however of human ingenuity in detecting and multiplying the secondary meanings of the inspired text, he does not appear to have felt it needful or desirable that any bounds whatsoever should be prescribed or even suggested; and if he nowhere rejects the historical interpretation, he assuredly speaks of it, when compared with the allegorical, as of infinitely lower concern and value to the faithful<sup>p</sup>.

(for he is evidently little more than a compiler) from which he derived his materials. Still his dictionary is perhaps better calculated than any single work which we possess, to give a general view of the principles and practice of the allegorical school which followed the authorities of Jerom and Augustin.

° His expositions appear remarkably free from all admixture of the superstitious and idolatrous views which had by this time so deeply infected the church.

<sup>p</sup> I subjoin the passage, which is interesting also as illustrating his views of the fourfold meaning now uni-



In the ninth century we find an additional impulse given to the love of mystical speculation in the Romish church, by the translation of the works already noticed in a former lecture as falsely attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite. These are said to have contributed (and the imputation may easily be credited) to the growth, not only of mysticism, but of many wild and unchristian notions <sup>q</sup>.

But of all those who during the middle ages applied the allegorical interpreta-

versally attributed to the sacred oracles. “Has quatuor  
“intelligentias (vid. Historiam, Allegoriam, Tropolo-  
“giam, et Anagogiam) quatuor matris Sapientiae filios  
“vocamus. Mater quippe Sapientia per has adoptionis fi-  
“lios pascit, conferens insipientibus atque teneris potum  
“in lacte *historiae*, in fide autem proficientibus cibum in  
“pane *allegoriae*, bonis vero et strenue operantibus, et  
“operibus bonis insudantibus, satietatem in sapida re-  
“fectione *tropologiae*; illis denique qui et ab imis per  
“contemptum terrenorum suspensi, et ad summa per  
“caeleste desiderium sunt provocati sobriam theoricæ  
“contemplationis ebrietatem in vino *anagogiae*.”

<sup>q</sup> See Buddeus, *Isag.* pp. 605, 6. The translation of Dionysius was made by the celebrated Joannes Scotus, or Erigena. His treatises were a second time translated by Saracenus, in the twelfth century; and translated (or edited and commented on) by Ficinus in the fifteenth.

tion of Scripture to the purposes of practical and spiritual edification, none is more generally, or on many grounds more deservedly celebrated, than the well-known Bernard, abbot of Clairval, in the twelfth century. His fervent and sincere piety, the sanctity and activity of his life, his intimate acquaintance with the wants and deficiencies of the human heart, and the inward renewal to singleness and purity of intention, to the love and practice of Christian holiness requisite for every believer, combined with the earnest and affectionate eloquence of his teaching, to gain for him an influence which in that age was rather increased than lessened by the alloy of superstition and credulity with which it was unquestionably adulterated<sup>r</sup>. To the name of Bernard some few others might be added, as contributing, by their spiritual

<sup>r</sup> This will be sufficiently proved by the inspection of almost any portion of his Homilies. The opinion entertained by Luther of this eminent Christian is worth recording. “Antefero omnibus Bernhardum, habuit enim “religionis optimam cognitionem.” Comm. in Gen. p. 154. See Buddeus, Isag. p. 538, and 606. and Cave, Hist. Lit. Article *Bernardus*.

application of Scripture, to the religious, if not to the intellectual advancement of their contemporaries<sup>s</sup>.

But we now approach a period of greater interest in the history both of sacred literature and of the human mind; the period at which the introduction of the Aristotelic philosophy and dialectics, if it did not produce any actual revolution in the essential principles and character of the established theology, had at least a powerful and conspicuous effect in enlarging the sphere of her inquiries, and remodelling the outward form and arrangement of her systems. It does not appear, however, that the revival of this philosophy, great as its shew of reasoning and of argument might be, and much as it might lead to and facilitate the discussion of more abstract and metaphysical questions, contributed to the material improvement of any province of scriptural interpretation. As to that branch of it indeed with which we are immediately concerned, it was in those ages scarcely possible that a church, receiving the opinions and

<sup>s</sup> Especially H. de S. Victore. See Rosenmuller.

traditions of the fathers as of an authority little inferior to that of Scripture itself, should have rejected, or even questioned, a mode of exposition which had received their almost unqualified and universal sanction. Accordingly we find the well-known Thomas Aquinas<sup>t</sup>, the most illustrious and authoritative name perhaps among the schoolmen, both admitting the validity of the allegorical method in his great systematic work on theology, and using it unhesitatingly and unsparingly in his own expositions of the sacred writings. Thus, in the cure of the nobleman's son, recorded by St. John<sup>u</sup>; in that of the woman who suffered from an issue of blood, recorded by St. Matthew<sup>x</sup>; and in the miracle of Cana; in the search made after our Lord by Joseph

<sup>t</sup> Summa Theologiæ. Cap. de S. Scriptura. Sermones. Moguntiæ, 1616. Coppenstein, Dispositiones Concionum &c. ad sensum literalem et sæpe *mysticum*, ex D. T. de Aquina in Matthæum et Marcum, et S. Bonaventuræ in Lucam Commentariis. (Eodem loco et anno.)

<sup>u</sup> Chap. iv. 52. So the cure of the leper, Matth. viii. of the blind, Luke xviii. and of the possessed female, Matth. xv. and the very action of our Lord in healing, (*he layed his hands upon them*, Luke iv.) are all allegorized.

<sup>x</sup> Matth. ix.

and the Virgin<sup>y</sup>; in our Lord's entrance into the ship<sup>z</sup>; in the gifts of the Magi; and in the name of the Proto-martyr Stephen, he finds matter of constant allegory: and his sermons on these subjects are entirely and exclusively dedicated to their spiritual application. I am not aware that any others among the schoolmen objected to the validity of the allegorical interpretation, or abstained from its practice. Neither did the controversy with the Jews, which from time to time occupied the attention, and but too frequently excited the worse passions of theological writers, though it led ultimately to salutary effects in promoting the study of the Hebrew language and Scriptures, tend in its first beginnings to improve on this score the system of biblical exposition. In arguing with those who admitted and admired the mysticism of the Talmud and the Midraschim, their Christian opponents were naturally led rather to take advantage of the ground on which that admission placed them, than to doubt or

<sup>y</sup> Luke i.

<sup>z</sup> Matth. ix.

question in any measure its real firmness and defensibility<sup>a</sup>. Nor do even they, who with more or less of reason opposed themselves during the middle ages to the corruptions and dominion of the Romish church, seem to have done otherwise than acquiesce in those modes of interpreting the word of God, which had obtained the countenance of her earlier and purer ages. The more Christian and soberminded among them urged, indeed, wisely and earnestly, the necessity of a constant recurrence to that word, and an obedience (sometimes perhaps an ill understood and servile obedience) to its letter: but the learning of their age could but little enable them to inquire into the admissibility or proper limitations of the allegorical method. Their whole attention too was justly directed to matters of more immediate and primary importance. We are not therefore surprised to find our own Wiclif adopting in part the exegetical la-

<sup>a</sup> See the *Pugio Fidei* of Raymundus Martini, (written c. A.D. 1250.) a singularly learned performance for its age; especially part ii. c.12. See the opinion of Wolfius in Buddeus, *Isag.* p. 997.



bours, and acquiescing in the allegorical theory of Jerom<sup>b</sup>. The more visionary dissenters from the Romish communion, as that portion of the Albigenses who held opinions not very remote from those of the Manichean school, or others who were under the immediate influence of wild and enthusiastic fancies<sup>c</sup>, sought, doubtless, as both their predecessors and successors have usually done, that countenance for their errors in the mystical, which they could scarcely extort from the literal sense of the inspired writings. If indeed a disposition to restrict and depreciate the allegorical method be any where discoverable in the history of this period, it must be sought among those Jewish commentators who were less attached to the traditions and mysteries of the Talmud and the Cabbala, and whose labours we shall have occasion to notice in the ensuing Lecture. Among the orthodox

<sup>b</sup> Wiclif's version retains the Hieronymian Prologues; and in his "Trialogus" he adopts the mystical sense attached by that father to our Lord's entry into Jerusalem.

<sup>c</sup> See Pluquet, Dict. des Hérésies, Art. *Albigcois*, *Joachim*, *Arnauld de Villeneuve*, &c.

that system daily increased in popularity ; nor can we wonder that its admirers were little solicitous to set any bounds to its biblical application, when we know that it was applied equally to the illustration, the *moralisation* as it was termed, of natural history and phenomena<sup>d</sup>, of the records, and even the fictions of classical antiquity<sup>e</sup>. By many too it was ignorantly, we grant, but yet unwarrantably and unchristianly adduced in support of those traditions, by which the church of Rome had well nigh overwhelmed and extinguished the doctrines and knowledge of the Gospel. To this fact ample testimony might be collected from the Offices and Hymns of the church

<sup>d</sup> Such were the *Bestiarium*, the *Liber Creaturarum*, the *Gesta Romanorum*, the *Ovidius Moralisatus*, and numerous other works of the same tendency, familiar to the inquirers into our early literature.

<sup>e</sup> In the year 1305, Vitalis a Furno wrote a “*Speculum Morale quo cuncta fere utriusque Testamenti loca mystico sensu applicantur.*” (Printed Venetiis, 1594, 1600. Cave.) See also Cave’s List of the Works of Tauler, 1350, and of Ruysbrock, 1360. The *Sermones et Exempla* of Herolt, a work popular in its time, and on many accounts of some interest, (see Warton, *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, vol. i.) abounds with matter of this kind.

herself, and from the exegetical and hortatory labours of her most illustrious members<sup>f</sup>. At the present day we readily admit, that such a licence of application would scarcely be defended by any among the more instructed of her communion. The recollection, however, that it was at one time undoubtingly and extensively practised, may yet serve as a caution to those who would indulge in or contend for the unrestricted use of that, which, if once fully admitted as a legitimate instrument of general exposition, might be applied with no less ease and plausibility to the propagation of error, than to the illustration and support of the truth<sup>g</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> See Glass. Phil. Sac. sect. De Allegoriis Pontificiorum. Rosenmuller, H. T. vol. v. pp. 209, 10. T. Aquinat. Serm. in Purificat. Mariæ; in Festo Agathæ; in Festo Ambrosii, &c. Herolt, Serm. 164.

<sup>g</sup> It were easy to point out more than one recent publication in which this licence of mystical and spiritual interpretation is maintained. One of the latest instances will be found in "An Analytical View of Christianity," Hatchard, 1822.



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## LECTURE VI.

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ZECHARIAH xiv. 6, 7.

*It shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark :*

*But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night : but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.*

**H**ITHERTO we have seen the allegorical method of interpretation gaining an early ascendancy in the schools of theology, modified according to the philosophical or religious prejudices of its votaries, and operating, in conjunction with other causes, to the almost total exclusion or extinction of that literal and historical research, without which no one, most assuredly, however piously and spiritually disposed, can hope to be regarded as a correct or judicious expositor of the sacred text. But under no circumstances, and in no quarter of the Christian church, (in none

I should rather say, of which we have at present any accurate or sufficient cognisance<sup>a</sup>;) have we seen its paramount value and authority questioned, or the grounds on which its pretensions rested exposed to doubt or discussion. Circumstances however, arising partly out of the progress of inquiry, partly out of the controversy with the Jews, one of the most important perhaps in which the church engaged during the middle ages, at length operated, if not to cast any immediate doubt or shade

<sup>a</sup> If (as some learned persons have supposed) the Syrian churches preserved the works of Theodorus Mopsuestenus and his followers, it is not impossible that a further research into the earlier literature of that church might afford us some more certain documents as to the methods of scriptural interpretation followed by the early Nestorians, and the extent to which they rejected the allegorical methods of the orthodox. Assemani mentions two works, possibly of an exegetical nature, by Theodorus, as still preserved in the Syriac. (*Quæstiones in S. S. et Interrogat. et Respons. Div.*) *Cat. Bibl. Vatic.* vol. iii. pp. 281—406. Much information as to this school, and many other points connected with our inquiry, will be found in Ernesti's *Dissertation De Interpret. Proph. Messian.* (*Opusc. Theol.* p. 447.) Bishop Munter (*De Schola Antioch.* p. 14.) states further, that N. C. Kallius had discovered, and was about to give to the public, the Commentary of Theodorus on the lesser Prophets.



upon the allegorical, to recall at least the attention of theologians to the value and importance of the primary sense of Scripture. In this controversy, the Jewish doctors appealed, as might be expected, to the Hebrew original of the Old Testament; and the reasonableness of their appeal was, so far at least, acknowledged by their adversaries, that we find the study of that language not only countenanced, but in more than one instance provided for by the ecclesiastical authorities of the day. Thus the literal interpretation of the Old Testament became of necessity more attended to and better understood. But the language of that divine record having long since become obsolete, its students were obliged to join to the study of the text that of the glosses and other expository works of the rabbinical schools. In many of these, in such especially as were of later origin, the historical and literal sense were almost exclusively insisted upon, with a view both to the instruction of their unlearned countrymen, and probably in opposition also to the spiritual and typical

application of the law and the prophets to him whom they rejected<sup>b</sup>. Hence those theologians who directed their labours to the confutation and conversion of the Jews, though far from acquiescing in the restrictions for which their adversaries contended, and for which indeed they who acknowledged the authority of their own mystical and cabbalistical doctors could not contend without evident inconsistency, were yet of necessity compelled to pay more attention to that literal and historical sense, which, however neglected, had never in these later times been actually questioned by any. .

The first writer of eminence who is stated to have derived this advantage from the knowledge and study of the Hebrew records, is Nicolaus de Lyra, (so termed from his birthplace, Lire in Normandy,) who flourished towards the beginning of the fourteenth century. In his glossarial

<sup>b</sup> Among these, the most eminent were Aben Ezra and Solomon Jarchi, (both said to have been attached to the sect of the Karaites,) and Kimchi; the latter known as the favourite expositor of Grotius. See Buddeus, *Isagog.* p. 1433 &c. and Rosenmuller, *H. I.* vol. v. pp. 200 &c. or Simon, *Crit. V. T.* lib. iii. cc. 6, 7.

annotations on the whole body of Scripture, entitled *Postillæ Perpetuæ*, De Lyra professedly gave his first attention to the attainment (so far as his means enabled him) of a correct text, and the discovery of its primary, grammatical, and historical import. He was far indeed from denying or doubting either the existence of a secondary and more spiritual sense; or the divisions of that sense into tropological, allegorical, and anagogical, which had so long possessed the uniform sanction of the church. On the contrary, he admits it as the intention of Him by whose spirit those Scriptures were given<sup>c</sup>; and illustrates it by an example frequently adduced to that purpose by more recent authors: the fourfold meaning, namely, of the word Jerusalem, which, literally understood, betokens the city so named; tropologically or morally, the soul of the true believer; alle-

<sup>c</sup> “Habet ille liber” (S. S.) “hoc speciale quod una  
“litera continet plures sensus. Cujus ratio est quia  
“principalis hujus libri auctor est ipse Deus, in cujus  
“potestate est non tantum uti vocibus ad aliquid signifi-  
“candum, sed etiam rebus significatis per voces uti ad  
“significandum alias res.”

gorically, the church militant on earth; and anagogically, or spiritually, the church triumphant in heaven. But from the danger necessarily attendant upon the indiscreet and unskilful invention or application of mystical interpretations, he urges wisely the paramount necessity of a previous and accurate understanding of the letter, more especially as argumentative or doctrinal proofs must be drawn from the literal sense, and from that alone: "And  
" it should be understood," he continues, " that this sense has been much obscured  
" by the expository methods usually adopted  
" by others; who, though they may have  
" said many things well, have yet touched  
" but sparingly on the literal, while they have  
" so multiplied the mystical senses, as nearly to overwhelm or smother it." He states it therefore to be his own great aim and intention to explain chiefly this primary and most important signification of the text, availing himself of the authority of the best interpreters, Jewish as well as Christian. He urges also that some passages of Scripture have no secondary or

mystical sense ; that others cannot strictly be said to have any literal sense at all, being solely and obviously figurative or allegorical<sup>d</sup>. Nor are these more sound and temperate views of the character and use of the mystical sense, and the necessity of illustrating that which is primary and fundamental by a recurrence to the original sources, the only merits of De Lyra. It was perhaps of yet greater consequence, that the tenor of these studies led him occasionally to differ freely from the opinions of those whom the church regarded as the most unerring and authoritative of her expositors. Thus the prophecy of Jacob concerning Judah, mentioned in a former Lecture<sup>e</sup> to have been applied (as early even as the second century) to the person of the Messiah, he refers explicitly in its historical sense to the patriarch, whose rich and prosperous dominion it unquestionably prefigured<sup>f</sup>. Thus too he discards the various

<sup>d</sup> Rosenmuller, p. 292. who from these passages would argue, that De Lyra had a glimpse of (*subolebat*) the more recent doctrine of *accommodation*. I cannot see any grounds for such a suspicion.

<sup>e</sup> Lect. III. p. 95.

<sup>f</sup> In Gen. xlix. 10.

mystical and superstitious explanations given to the expression "*the sons of God*," in the sixth chapter of Genesis; and decides in favour of those who apply this high title to the pious descendants of Seth, and its opposite, "*the daughters of men*," to the dissolute and irreligious daughters of Cain<sup>§</sup>.

That De Lyra should not exhibit throughout the whole of his Commentaries the same acuteness and judgment, and that, in the explanation of the New Testament especially, his ignorance of the Greek language should have diminished very materially both the accuracy and usefulness of his labours, will rather meet with the excuse than excite the surprise of those who recollect the character and prejudices of his age. It is no inconsiderable praise, that by the general soundness and justness of his expositions he attracted the admiration, and contributed probably in some measure to the instruction of Luther, and of his great coadjutors in the work of reformation. "Ego," (declares Luther himself, with his natural warmth of feeling,) "Ego

§ In Gen. vi. 2.



“ Lyranum ideo amo, et inter optimos pono :  
 “ quod ubique diligenter retinet et persequi-  
 “ tur historiam, quanquam auctoritate pa-  
 “ trum se vinci patitur, et nonnunquam eo-  
 “ rum exemplo deflectit a proprietate sen-  
 “ tentiæ ad ineptas allegorias<sup>h</sup>.” Others, it  
 will be remembered, had done this, not  
*sometimes*, but constantly and unhesitat-  
 ingly. The opinion indeed of De Lyra on  
 this subject appears by no means to have  
 been readily or generally acquiesced in by  
 his contemporaries<sup>i</sup>. It was urged again,  
 as it had repeatedly been urged heretofore  
 in defence of the allegorical method, that  
 “ the *letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.*”  
 His approval, however partial and quali-  
 fied, of the Jewish expositions, and the pre-  
 sumption and *irrationality* of differing from  
 those fathers whose authority was held little  
 less than sacred, of questioning the infalli-  
 bility of Ambrose, Augustin, Gregory, and

<sup>h</sup> See Buddeus, p. 1432, and Rosenmuller, vol. v. p. 280, &c. To these sources I am chiefly indebted for the notice of De Lyra.

<sup>i</sup> See the objections of Paulus Burgensis. Rosenmuller, pp. 310. 314.

Bede, were strongly and superstitiously objected to him. We have a competent authority, however, (that of the celebrated Gerson, chancellor of the university of Paris, and one of the leaders of the well known council of Constance, in the year 1414,) for believing, that the literal interpretation of Scripture was much more favourably regarded by those, who at that period dissented from the abuses and usurpations of the papal see. “*Seminatores hæresium,*” (says that eminent and pious mystic, whose only fault appears to have been too ready an acquiescence in the persecuting and intolerant spirit of his church and age,) “*Seminatores hæresium et impugnatores veritatis, quam agnoscunt vel agnoscere debent, quum se catholicos profiteantur, dicunt fundari dicta sua in Scriptura sacra, et ejus sensu vero literalis, quam solam Scripturam dicunt se velle insequi et admittere.*” To this appeal Gerson (attached as he personally was to the allegorical method) could not make any direct exception. It had been conceded (howsoever their practice might sometimes have been

opposed to their theory) by many of the most eminent theologians, “*Sensum mysticum nihil valere ad probanda fidei dogmata:*” but he at once invalidates his concessions as to any practical use, by adding, “*Sensus Scripturæ judicandus est, prout ecclesia Spiritu Sancto inspirata et gubernata determinavit, et non ad cujuslibet arbitrium vel interpretationem*<sup>k</sup>.”

Thus circumscribed and depressed, it was not to be expected that the literal and critical study of the sacred text should make any sensible or rapid progress. We find accordingly the tide of popular and ecclesiastical prejudice still strongly in favour of the allegorical and mystical exposition. Some however who practised this method appear to have treated the great doctrines of the Christian faith in such a manner, as very considerably to detach the minds of their hearers or readers from the burdensome and superstitious observances of a corrupt church, and to elevate them to the love and pursuit of a more inward and spiritual communion with the great Author

<sup>k</sup> See Rosenmuller, vol. v. pp. 331, &c.

and Fountain of grace and salvation. Among these, none appears more deserving of notice than the mystic Tauler, whose labours (labours rendered still more extensively and effectually useful by their being made public in his native German) commanded the admiration and esteem of Luther, of Melancthon, and many other champions of vital and essential religion<sup>1</sup>. But it was rather by inculcating a purer and more internal principle of faith and love, rather by a more intimate acquaintance with the spirit of the gospel, than by any superiority in learning or criticism, that these best lights of a darkened age were enabled to promote the growth of their Master's spiritual kingdom<sup>m</sup>. The scrip-

<sup>1</sup> See Buddeus, pp. 608, &c. A complete and correct edition of the works of Tauler is said to have been published by the pious Spener. I have the opportunity of consulting only the edition of L. Surius, (Coloniæ, 1615,) who professes to have *corrected from ancient copies* those passages which he admits to have worn, in the German text usually received, an aspect favourable to the reformers. (Surius Epist. Nuncup. p. 3.) Tauler flourished A. D. 1350.

<sup>m</sup> It should not however be disguised, that the works of Tauler, like those of all mystical writers, contain much

tural expositions of Tauler, powerfully and beautifully as they are often applied to the best and highest purposes, are yet for the most part such as will not stand the test of accurate criticism. Like those of Bernard, whom he chiefly admired and most successfully imitated, they are characterized by the most unrestrained flights of allegory and mysticism. He no where, so far as I have examined his works, imposes any limits to the spiritual application of scripture history, either in the Old or New Testament. Nor indeed does it appear that there was to be found in any quarter the requisite learning

that is obscure and questionable; that he recommends a degree of spiritual abstraction fitted only for the retirement of the cloister, or the actual insulation of the hermitage, (see Serm. p. 109.) that the general tenor of his theory of the inward life would lead men to the pursuit of this abstraction, or even of an imaginary absorption into the divine essence, rather than to those habits of Christian usefulness grounded upon Christian principle, which are the distinguishing marks and bounden duty of every believer; habits supported indeed and cherished, but in no case superseded, by spiritual communion with his Master and Redeemer. Nor was Tauler (especially if the treatise attributed to him by Surius be really his composition) by any means free from the general superstitions of his age and church.

and ability or the systematic attempt to reduce the principles of scriptural interpretation within reasonable and intelligible limits<sup>n</sup>, until the revival of letters, and the general study of the original languages, had led to the closer and more accurate investigation of the literal and historical senses; senses, it should yet be remembered, hitherto overlooked rather than denied. And here we find the first real and material improvement due to him, who (whatsoever might be the defects of his theological system or the weakness of his practice) deserves unquestionably the full praise of having been the first and most accomplished restorer of sacred literature and criticism. In his celebrated Paraphrase on the Books of the New Testament, (composed between the years 1517 and 1524,) Erasmus professedly deviates from the example of his predecessors<sup>o</sup>, if not in abstaining altogether from the alle-

<sup>n</sup> The profession of the “*seminatores hæresium*,” (probably the follower of J. Huss and Jerome of Prague,) alluded to by Gerson, shews that the disposition existed.

<sup>o</sup> Unless we consider Laurentius Valla, who had written exclusively on the critical emendation and construction of the text, as an exception. It may here be stated,



gorical method, yet in using it much more sparingly and cautiously. “Allegorias” (he declares in his dedication to the Gospel of St. John<sup>p</sup>) “in quibus video veterum quosdam  
 “ad superstitionem usque fuisse diligentes,  
 “parcius, nec ultra quam satis esse judicabam, attigi.” And in his treatise, entitled the Preacher, (Ecclesiastes,) a treatise calculated to give the most just and favourable notions of the character and powers of his mind, and even in the present day to benefit as well as interest the theological student<sup>q</sup>, he has entered more fully into the consideration of its validity and necessary limitations<sup>r</sup>. He commences by stating fully and unreservedly the erroneous principles and practices with which even the

(for our limits will not permit us to enter on the general history of mysticism,) that Ficinus, P. Mirandula, and perhaps Reuchlin, appear to have inclined much to the Platonic and Cabbalistic expositions of the Alexandrian school.

<sup>p</sup> Rosenmuller, p. 446.

<sup>q</sup> The Ecclesiastes has been more than once printed separately. The first book only was published in this country by Dr. Bray, about the beginning of the last century.

<sup>r</sup> Ecclesiastes, lib. 3. pp. 1028. &c. Erasmi Opp. Ed. Clerici, vol. v.

earlier fathers (he specifies Origen<sup>s</sup>, and his imitators Hilary and Ambrose) were on this score most justly chargeable, not only in their moral and spiritual compositions, but in the conduct also of their doctrinal controversies with the opponents of the church. “*Exempla*” (he urges with truth and feeling) “*crebrius sunt obvia quam vellemus.*” Nor does he hesitate to condemn the excessive fondness for allegorizing even the plainest statements of fact and of history, which distinguished (as we have already noticed) the great oracles of his church, Jerom and Augustin. The Commentary of the latter upon the Psalms he particularizes as especially marked by this defect. In the practice of more recent expositors, he blames freely and fearlessly the unwarrantable accommodation of Scripture to the superstitious exaltation and worship of the blessed Virgin. To her, he complains that the heated imaginations of her votaries had applied all that was said of the mystical bride and heavenly wisdom

<sup>s</sup> He palliates, however, the excesses of Origen. “*Origenem nonnihil excusat temporum ratio.*” A century earlier, this excuse would scarcely have been understood.

of Solomon; that they had even supposed her typified as a protectress and a refuge in the ark of Noah; that they had accommodated to the description of her person and offices these and other figurative passages, which, if they were capable of any such meaning, must be considered as equally typical of all believers. “*Eo sensu quo de piis omnibus, eoque solo.*” We have, in a former Lecture, seen Augustin himself affirming, that whatsoever spiritual exposition could be attached to any passage of holy writ (providing such exposition contained or insinuated nothing contrary to sound doctrine) was in reality not only foreknown, but intended and preordained by its almighty and infallible Author<sup>t</sup>. A stronger contrast to this and the like positions, but too frequent with his predecessors, cannot well be found, than that which is offered by the temperate and judicious counsel of Erasmus on the same point. “*Quanquam in his locis, quorum allegoriam nobis non aperuit canonicæ Scripturæ auctoritas, non imputatur crimen impietatis, si quis sedulo citraque controversiam*

<sup>t</sup> Lect. V. p. 177.

“ adfert sententiam, quam ibi fortassis non  
 “ cogitabat is qui scripsit, modo pietati con-  
 “ gruat quod adfertur; tamen, quantum  
 “ humana industria præstari potest, bona  
 “ fide cavendum est, ut quod interpreta-  
 “ mur quam minime sit violentum ac de-  
 “ tortum ”.”

But for the more limited and prudent use of the allegorical method, he contends with the earnestness of one who felt its spiritual and practical value. In the opinion that there is good reason for supposing many passages of Scripture to be capable of such an exposition, besides those to which we are taught to apply it by the express authority of that Scripture itself, he would probably be fully countenanced by many soberminded and unprejudiced Christians of the present day; though it would be difficult to give an unqualified assent to that which follows: “Non absurdum est  
 “ voluisse Spiritum Sanctum ut sacra Scrip-  
 “ tura nonnunquam varios gignat sensus,  
 “ pro cujusque affectu. Neque hæc est  
 “ Scripturarum incertitudo, sed fœcundi-  
 “ tas.” The use and value of such a spiritual

understanding of the Scriptures, beyond that which is to be derived from a mere acquiescence in the outward letter, he affirms to be, that, wheresoever it arises out of fair and reasonable grounds of analogy, it contributes to strengthen the impressions made by religious truth, to interest the affections more deeply and constantly in its behalf, to stimulate us to higher exertions, and to console us under the doubts and difficulties of the Christian warfare<sup>x</sup>. That these are the results and privileges of a spiritual view of the Christian scheme, and of the frame of mind which such a view, accepted and entertained in singleness and sincerity of heart, must produce, it cannot be questioned; that such benefits however are to be secured or enhanced by any thing approaching to the misinterpretation or misapplication of the sacred text, is a position both untrue in itself, and on many accounts highly unsafe. There is no department whatsoever of religion in which the play of our imagination can, without the prospect of much danger, danger both to ourselves and

<sup>x</sup> P. 1047.

to those around us, be suffered to usurp the place and praise of the soberer conviction and subjection of the intellect; or mistaken, as it but too frequently is mistaken, for warmth of piety and depth of feeling. So well aware was Erasmus of the possible, in his own times indeed the actual, abuse of this practice, that he more than once urges the caution, admitted at least, if not acted upon, by many of his predecessors, that allegorical interpretations have, in fundamental questions, either of doctrine or discipline, no argumentative force or value whatsoever.

In the “*Enchiridion Militis Christiani*,” Erasmus had written much more warmly and unguardedly in defence of their spiritual and practical usefulness, as opposed partly to researches exclusively grammatical, and partly to the mere formal and superstitious repetitions of the letter, practised by the less enlightened among the monastic religionists<sup>t</sup>. The necessity however of re-

<sup>t</sup> “*Ex interpretibus D. Script. eos potissimum selige, qui a littera quam maxime recedunt,*” &c. (apud Buddei Isag. p. 1552.) It is singular that Buddeus, whose



cunning to and investigating the literal and historical senses of Scripture, as the only real and legitimate foundation of the mystical and spiritual, is again urged at length in the general preface affixed to his Annotations on the New Testament. Here indeed, and in all the express and declaratory statements of Erasmus on this subject, there are occasional marks of that hesitation and unwillingness to oppose himself too strongly and openly to the current of received opinions, which formed so conspicuous a part of his character as an author and a man <sup>u</sup>. The real extent to which he would have consented to forego the use of the allegorical method, may therefore in all probability be better collected from the general tone and temper of this well known Com-

remarks on this passage are highly judicious, should have overlooked or forgotten the more qualified statements of the Ecclesiastes, which appears to have been written several years after the Enchiridion.

<sup>u</sup> He might too, naturally and reasonably, have entertained some dread of depreciating and discouraging overmuch a practice which might lead to the reception of more pure and spiritual feelings than those entertained by the mass of his contemporaries.

mentary, than from the authorities even which we have adduced. And here (though his omissions in fact speak yet more loudly than his criticisms) we find him in more than one place reprobating its excess with much confidence. “Video quosdam,” (he is speaking of those who saw in the ship of Peter and the ark of Noah a type of the church,) “Video quosdam in hujusmodi nugis velut in re seria malle philosophari vel somnare potius<sup>x</sup>.” Thus again in commenting on the words, *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward, and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward*, he objects to the customary exposition of this text, which applied the terms *prophet* and *righteous man* to the Saviour of mankind.

In allusion to those who fancied themselves to discover mysteries in the numbers incidentally mentioned in Scripture, (his immediate subject is the good seed, which,

<sup>x</sup> In Matth. ix.

as we are told, *falling on good ground, produced some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold*<sup>y</sup>;) “Ego,” he admits, “hanc  
 “piam diligentiam sanctamque curiosita-  
 “tem non improbo in literis divinis;” but  
 he distinctly sets aside its labours in favour  
 of the simple and obvious meaning of the  
 text<sup>z</sup>. The mystical significations attached  
 by Augustin to the forty and six years oc-  
 cupied in the building of the second Tem-  
 ple<sup>a</sup>, and to our Lord’s question, *Are there*

<sup>y</sup> In Matth. x. 44.

<sup>z</sup> In Matth. xiii. 8. The note refers to some previous  
 expositions singularly unreasonable, and one assuredly  
 worse than unreasonable. “Augustinus” (De Civ. Dei,  
 lib. xxi.) “testatur quosdam hunc locum stultissime huc  
 “detorsisse ut dicerent, *impios a sanctis liberandos ab*  
 “*æterno supplicio*, ab aliis trigenos, ab aliis sexagenos,  
 “ab aliis centenos, *pro portione meritorum*.” See also  
 note on ver. 33.

<sup>a</sup> In Joan. ii. 20. “Serio nec semel indicat Augusti-  
 “nus hunc numerum reperiri in nomine ’Αδάμ.” “Huic  
 “simillimum est quod annotavit quatuor literis, quibus  
 “scribunt ’Αδάμ, designari quatuor plagas ἀνατολῆν, δύσιν,  
 “ἄρκτον, μεσημβρίαν. Quod quidem et ante hunc notavit  
 “D. Cyprianus, *sed homo fuit uterque*.” Thus in Joan.  
 v. “Eatenus debetur sanctis viris reverentia, ut siquid  
 “errarint, *nam errant et sancti*, citra personæ contume-  
 “liam, *veritati patrocinemur*.”

*not twelve hours in the day*<sup>b</sup>? afford him the opportunity of asserting that liberty of dissenting from the traditions of the fathers, however great their personal merits and sanctity, without which the Christian expositor must have found the scope and usefulness of his labours circumscribed and impeded on every side. Throughout the whole indeed of this extraordinary work, it will be observed, that Erasmus introduces but few instances of the spiritual exposition so popular in his day, and those almost invariably for the sole purpose of refuting them. In his feelings upon this, as upon many other subjects, Erasmus was imitated by the amiable and liberal Melancthon. Even at the early age of two and twenty, and some years before the sentiments of the former on this point had been fully and systematically detailed in his *Ecclésiastes*, the latter had, in a work partly dedicated to the expository and hortatory labours of the Christian ministry<sup>c</sup>, consi-

<sup>b</sup> In Joan. xi. 9.

<sup>c</sup> De Rhetorica, lib. 2. For the passages in question I am solely indebted to the *Clavis S. Scripturæ* of

dered our subject at some length, and with his usual good sense and Christian temper. Deriving probably his general view of the question from the paraphrase of his predecessor, a work with which he could scarcely be unacquainted, he reprobates strongly the absurd and childish allegories of the schoolmen, and rejects the fourfold sense which they attached to Scripture on the grounds of its vagueness and uncertainty<sup>d</sup>. He urges the necessity of looking to one single, intelligible, and well-founded signification in every paragraph of the sacred text<sup>e</sup>; while he admits the typical intention of much that it contains, to an extent perhaps in which the severer judgment of some among those who succeeded him, would not altogether have acquiesced: these however

Flacius, a work admirably calculated to afford a general view of the state of theological opinion and biblical learning in his own age and country. (Basileæ, 1580, and elsewhere.)

<sup>d</sup> “Fit enim incerte oratio discerpta in tot sententias.”

<sup>e</sup> “Nos meminerimus unam quandam ac certam et simplicem sententiam ubique quærendam esse.” “Nam oratio quæ non habet unam ac simplicem sententiam nihil docet.” Compare the section De 4 Sensibus SS. in the treatise of Melancthon De Officio Concionatoris.

he restricts carefully to objects of a nature purely spiritual, to the kingdom of our Lord, the covenant of grace, and the faith and duties of the Christian<sup>f</sup>.

The examples of Erasmus and Melancthon were not lost upon the great father of the reformation. Luther, whose gigantic mind found space and power, amid all the hurry of his practical and controversial exertions, not only to translate, but to comment largely upon the Scriptures, has more than once deliberately and distinctly expressed his disapprobation of this mode of exposition, as it was practised and

<sup>f</sup> It must be admitted that Melancthon's opinions, as to some points of detail, do not appear fully consistent with his first principles. He is not indisposed at least to acquiesce in some spiritual applications both of the Old and New Testament, which rest on no surer foundation than any others proposed by the allegorists from whom he derives them. His sermons occasionally present examples of the same licence. Thus, in that on the 24th Sunday after Trinity, "Non sunt omnia in allegorias transformanda, sed interdum *facta* ac exempla, adeo illustres imaginationes, continent, ut non dubium sit aliquid significatum esse." "*Hic satis concinna significatio synagogæ est mulier laborans fluxu quæ suas facultates in curatione frustra impenderet.*" Such instances are however very rare.



admired by the votaries of the Romish see<sup>s</sup>. “*Literalis sensus Scripturæ*,” he affirms, “*solus tota est fidei et theologiæ Christianæ substantia* ;” and to the neglect of the literal sense he attributes the origin of many heretical and mistaken notions<sup>h</sup>. “*Allegoria*,” he contends, “*ad probandam nihil valent* ;” or, as he elsewhere expresses it, “*Non pariunt firmas probationes in theologia, sed velut picturæ ornant et illustrant rem*.” And again yet more strongly : “*Allegoriae sunt inanes speculationes et tantumquam spuma sacrae scripturæ, sola enim historica sententia est quæ vera et solida docet*<sup>i</sup>.” Elsewhere he assigns a reason, not always sufficiently kept in view by the commentators on holy writ, for the abstaining from such uncertain and question-

<sup>s</sup> For the references to the works of Luther, I am indebted chiefly to a very useful digest of his opinions given in his own words by M. T. Fabricius, “*Loci Communes, D. M. Lutheri, Londini*,” (reprinted from a German edition,) “1651.”

<sup>h</sup> Fabricius Cl. 1. p. 73. E tomo Opp. Luth. 3tio.

<sup>i</sup> Fabric. Cl. 1. p. 74. He adduces opinions nearly similar from Luther in Genes. iii. xv. and xxx. and in Matth. xvi.

able grounds of argument ; “ Incertis et de-  
 “ tortis probationibus fidem tueri est hosti-  
 “ bus et linguarum peritis Christianam fi-  
 “ dem deridendam propinare, qui magis sal-  
 “ tem in erroribus indurantur, et fidem no-  
 “ stram magna cum specie pro fabula tra-  
 “ ducunt <sup>k</sup>.” But carefully and powerfully  
 as Luther lays down on this head (and it  
 were easy to multiply quotations to the  
 same effect) a principle of interpretation so  
 well calculated to guard against the excess  
 and error of his predecessors, he was yet in  
 his own practice occasionally betrayed by  
 the fervor of his imagination, and his at-  
 tachment perhaps to the writings of Au-  
 gustin, into an inadvertency in the admis-  
 sion of allegorical glosses, which we should  
 scarcely anticipate from the tenor of his  
 abstract positions. Thus in the commence-  
 ment of the book of Genesis <sup>l</sup> he sees the  
 person and operation, and in the ladder of  
 Jacob, the earthly appearance of our Lord.

<sup>k</sup> “ De Scholis Instituendis : ” (apud Limborch Theol.  
 Christiana, p. 34.) See also Luther’s praise of De Lyra,  
 mentioned above.

<sup>l</sup> ברשת. ’Εν ἀρχῇ. In verbo.

In Gilead he finds the type of holy Scripture ; in the seventh day that of our Lord's rest in the tomb ; and in the eighth that of eternal life.

But these inconsistencies, the trifling defects or oversights of a mind acute and energetic far beyond the common lot of man, operated, in all probability, much less forcibly upon the minds of his admirers and followers, than the spirit of his general principles, and unqualified opposition to the more superstitious application of the allegorical method, which had for centuries contributed to rivet the fetters imposed by the faith of Rome both on the conscience and the intellect of mankind.

Luther had for his fellow-labourer in the great cause of Scripture and of truth, one who, to equal learning and acuteness, joined a severer and more philosophical temper of mind. Accustomed to subject, not only the opinions and arguments of his adversaries, but the whole body of Christian doctrine, to the most rigorous and systematic examination, and unwilling to admit any thing which could

not be supported by the most direct and strictest methods of testimony and proof, Calvin, with the resolute and undissembling confidence which so strongly marked the whole of his character and proceedings, adopted principles of exposition which, since the condemnation of Theodorus in the fifth century, had scarcely perhaps been heard of, had assuredly never been entertained in the Christian church. Erasmus indeed and Luther had, as we have seen, strongly and uniformly reprobated the neglect of the literal interpretation, and the abuse of the allegorical to the purposes of a blind and mischievous superstition. All the abler doctors of the church had acknowledged, in their systems, at least, and canonical decisions, that, considered *per se*, that sense was at no time argumentative or probative; and had determined accordingly, that it was in all cases to be accommodated to, and strictly limited by the orthodox rule of faith. But Calvin saw clearly that if such a concession and such restrictions were made upon any reasonable and intelligible grounds, it must be

admitted that the method itself had no ultimate foundation in truth ; that it was (as for ages received and practised by most theologians) little better than the result of mere human imagination and ingenuity. In his great work on the Institutes of Christianity we find accordingly no reference to, and no endeavour to avail himself of an auxiliary so weak and uncertain. In his Commentaries upon Scripture (Commentaries, which, though in the exercise of our Christian liberty we may freely question and dissent from many points both of doctrine and discipline maintained by their illustrious author, are yet never to be perused without admiration and instruction, or mentioned without respect and gratitude) he distinctly and constantly rejects every form of the older allegory and mysticism, insisting only upon that which he held to be either clearly and literally prophetic, or fairly deducible from the figurative character borne by those to whom the Gospel had taught us to look as the unquestionable types of the incarnate

Word<sup>m</sup>. As to the number of passages which might be considered as belonging to the former class, if Calvin erred, his error was assuredly not upon the side of excess. In the discovery and application of those which might be included in the latter, it were not very difficult for a warm and imaginative mind to proceed to a length of extravagance but little inferior to that of the earlier allegorists. This was not however the disposition of the cautious and austere reformer. In many cases where we should not object, at least, to those who affixed a secondary and typical meaning to the original text, (as in those passages especially which have been supposed to bear a double relation to the Jewish and to the Christian church,) he appears disposed rather to ground such an application on the parity or similarity of the subjects and their condition, than upon any thing of a distinctly typical and prophetical character. Even in many of the passages quoted

<sup>m</sup> So (in Psalm cix.) “David personam Dei et ecclesiæ  
“sustinet.”



by the writers of the New Testament from the oracles of the law and the prophets, he is disposed to look not so much for an intention originally spiritual and predictive of higher things, as for the authoritative application of a new and more extended sense by the inspired transcribers themselves. Of this system, well known by the title, a title which he does not himself scruple to use, of *accommodation*<sup>n</sup>, he may be regarded perhaps, so far as modern theology is concerned, as the first and most eminent patron and advocate.

But the extent to which the mode of exposition adopted by Calvin differed from that which had had the sanction of so many

<sup>n</sup> “Non tam interpretatur” (is his own expression in the case of Psalm lxiii. 19. quoted Ephes. iv. 3.) “quam *“pia deflexione ad Christi personam accommodat.”* Calvin, in Ps. viii. 6. The 110th Psalm he considers as exclusively prophetic of our Lord. In reference to a passage usually quoted in defence of his peculiar doctrines, (Ps. xiv. 3.) though he asserts the authority by which St. Paul so applies it, he admits that it is not originally *in se* probative of the universal corruption of our nature. See also his opinion as to the mystical significations usually affixed to the titles of the Psalms. (Comm. in Ps. xxii.)

ages, will be most readily and accurately understood by the comparison of any portion of his Commentaries on Scripture; those for instance on the prophecies of Isaiah, or the Psalms of David, with the previous labours of Jerom or Augustin on the same subjects. The comparison will at least serve to demonstrate, that the more severe and temperate mode of interpretation is not necessarily less compatible with, or less conducive to the sound and spiritual enforcement of religious truth, and the real edification of the believer, than the more fanciful and excursive misapplication of the text, to which some would even yet almost exclusively attach the name and praise of spiritual teaching. It is indeed much to be regretted, that more than one of the writers who have at various times been foremost in maintaining those opinions of the great reformer, which have, on no insufficient grounds of reason and Scripture, been questioned by many of the best and wisest Christians, should not have imitated him also in that prudent and practical interpretation of holy writ, which

has repeatedly commanded the acquiescence and approbation even of those who could by no means admit, in all its parts and bearings, his view of the Christian scheme. Even allowing that he carried his critical principles to the exclusion of some cases where a secondary and spiritual sense might reasonably and usefully be attached to the inspired word<sup>o</sup>, and that his expressions, as to the mode of quotation used by the writers of the New Testament, are occasionally objectionable, he did unquestionably confer no light and inconsiderable benefit upon the church, by the courage with which he rejected the use and owned the invalidity of those subsidiaries, which could not stand the test of a rigorous and accurate examination.

Some there were, who, though equally attached to the doctrines of the reformation, were disposed to indulge a yet greater

<sup>o</sup> Calvin encountered on this score much opposition and obloquy; the Romanists scrupled not to stigmatize him as a Mahometan, (see Limborch, *Theol. Christ.* p. 34.) and the protestant Hunnius, (in his *Calvinus Judaizans*,) as little better than a Jew.

latitude to the practice of such spiritual interpretation as was not opposed to their own purer views of Christian faith and discipline. One among these, Hyperius, (a writer of sufficient eminence to have been largely referred to as an authority on this point<sup>p</sup>,) though his general principles and cautions do not materially differ from those laid down by Melancthon, appears to concede practically far too much to a mistaken notion of utility. He admits, that, where-soever the bare and literal meaning of the text offers nothing immediately and obviously spiritual, it is lawful to seek for a

<sup>p</sup> Apud Flacii Clavem S. S. ut supra. Hyperius, so called from his birthplace Ypres, (his original name was And. Gerhard,) wrote c. A. D. 1560. He is favourably noticed by Buddeus, (Isag. pp. 10, 11, 12.) and again yet more strongly, p. 372. Among those whose theory approaches most nearly to that of Melancthon and Hyperius, may be reckoned Flacius himself. See his *Glossa super Act. Apost. xiii. 33. super Ep. ad Galatas, iv. 21. ad Hebr. vii. 1.* He contends for the existence of the allegorical independently of the typical sense, and seems not indisposed to apply it occasionally to the narrative of the New Testament; (see Gl. in Matth. xxi. 5.) but this is seldom his practice. (*Novum Test. cum Glossa Flacii, 1570.*)

secondary and mystical sense more conducive to edification. On this ground he attaches an imaginary value to expositions (in the earlier parts of the Old Testament especially) not more defensible than those of Philo and Origen. Thus he objects not to seeing in the two wives of the patriarch Jacob, Leah and Rachel, in the former the personification of human, in the latter that of divine philosophy. He distinguishes so carefully between the typical and the allegorical, or more properly the anagogical sense, as to leave no doubt that he considered the latter not merely as an extension or modification of the former, but as resting upon grounds and regulated by canons of its own.

Peter Martyr, on the contrary, (a name if not of high authority, yet certainly more familiar to our own recollections,) was disposed in all probability, so far as we can judge from the silence observed on this subject in that section of his *Loci Communes Theologici*, which relates to the character of holy Scripture, to adhere much more closely to the example of Calvin. In

combating indeed the opinions of the Romanists, he objects most strongly to the use of the allegorical, which he terms with perfect truth “the most infirm of arguments<sup>q</sup>.” The more unqualified admiration and uncontrolled use of this method seems at this period to have been confined chiefly to two very opposite descriptions of religionists. It met with the support, on the one hand, of those enthusiastic and turbulent visionaries, who, under the name of anabaptists, so materially disgraced and injured the cause of the reformation<sup>r</sup>; and, on the other, of those who, adhering to the papal

<sup>q</sup> L. C. T. p. 632. It appears not improbable, that this work contains the substance of the theological lectures given by P. Martyr in the university of Oxford.

<sup>r</sup> “Anabaptistæ nostris temporibus allegoria mirifice delectati, atque iis per multum ad paradoxa sua impetritis comprobanda effecere.” Hyperius apud Flacium, C. S. S. p. 81. It appears from the same authority, that the orthodox were occasionally imprudent enough to attempt their refutation by the use of the same weapon. The fanatical works which assisted in producing such mischievous and melancholy effects are stated to have been the “*Spirituales Restitutiones*,” and the “*Liber de Mysteriis Sacræ Scripturæ*,” both written by Bernard Rothman, the anabaptist bishop of Munster, A. D. 1535. See H. Schyn Hist. Mennonitarum. (Amstel. 1723.) c. 9.



communion, could not, consistently with their attachment to the traditions of that church, and their professed deference for the opinions of her doctors, well attempt to dispute or depart from a practice, which had obtained the uniform support of their authority and example.

In our own country, the earlier patrons and instruments of the reformation appear, so far as we may judge from their practice, to have been fully aware, that the allegorical method of their forefathers was indeed both questionable and liable to much and serious misapplication. Tyndal, the great and laborious champion and confessor of our new built Zion, while he fully admits the spiritual application of all that is confessedly typical<sup>s</sup>, condemns strongly the fourfold division of Scripture, and mystical perversion of its contents, still retained by the church of Rome; and insists no less strongly on the use and value of its literal exposition. "We may," he asserts, and it were unjustifiable to give his opinions in

<sup>s</sup> See especially his Prologue to the Book of Leviticus.

any other than his own language; “We  
“ may borrow similitudes or allegories from  
“ the Scriptures, and apply them to our  
“ purposes, which allegories are no sense of  
“ the Scriptures, but free things besides  
“ the Scriptures altogether in the liberty of  
“ the Spirit.” He urges that these should  
be carefully reduced to strict conformity  
with the purity of Christian doctrine; and  
even “such allegory” (he continues) “prov-  
“ eth nothing, it is a mere simile.” “The  
“ literal sense proveth or supporteth the  
“ allegory.” He contends earnestly and  
justly for the spiritual and moral uses to  
be derived from a reasonable and Christian  
view of those narratives, of the Old Testa-  
ment especially, which we have seen so  
many allegorists attempting to depreciate,  
if not to disbelieve. And he urges, with a  
force and conciseness to which no para-  
phrase or imitation could do justice, “God  
“ is a spirit, and all his words are spiritual,  
“ and his literal sense is spiritual<sup>t</sup>.”

Such was the light, a light gradually but

<sup>t</sup> Obedience of a Christian Man, (ed. 1572,) p. 166.

steadily increasing, which the study of the original languages, and the cultivation of sound and useful literature, were permitted, by the grace and goodness of Providence, to cast upon that spiritual and practical exposition of the word of life, which requires not the less of Christian sobriety and caution in the investigation of its principles, and the conduct of its details, because it is in itself undoubtedly of the highest and most vital importance to the instruction and establishment of the believer.

In this progress of religious truth we have seen the beautiful and consolatory promise of our text almost realized as it were afresh: we have seen her dawnings, after the long night of ignorance and superstition, leading to a day, far preferable indeed to the obscurity which preceded it, but yet *a day*, whose *light was neither clear nor dark*, until at the *eventide* it became *light*.

Though that season have long since passed, and the complexion of the times upon which our lot has fallen be widely diffe-

rent, yet this recollection of the things that were of old may well serve to awaken our gratitude, and to strengthen our attachment to the principles, principles equally distant from a blind and servile deference to mere prescription, and the no less blind and captious rejection of all that is ancient and venerable and authoritative, for which, under the Giver of all good, we are indebted to the fathers and advocates of the reformation.

So may *the living waters* still go out from our *Jerusalem* towards the *former sea* and the *hinder sea*, in summer and in winter, until *the Lord be king over all the earth*<sup>u</sup>.

<sup>u</sup> Zechariah xiv. 8.

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## LECTURE VII.

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PROVERBS xix. 27.

*Cease to hear the word of instruction that causeth to err  
from the words of knowledge.*

THE course of our researches has now brought us to a period at which the spirit of philosophical and theological inquiry, and the conscious feelings of Christian liberty and right of judgment, first generated by the revival of letters and the reformation of the church, began to operate more actively and extensively among those who, in the earlier and more important struggle against the common oppression, had found less time and attention to spare for discussions of subordinate points, whether of doctrine or of discipline. It appears deeply to be regretted, (so far as in the infirmity of human judgment we may be allowed to pronounce on such subjects,) that

these discussions, when they did at last arise, were not conducted with that Christian forbearance and concession, which might possibly have prevented the division of more than one branch of the Christian church, and the commission even of much actual violence and injustice. Our present object concerns however the general history of religious opinions and divisions so far only as they may appear to be connected with, to have originated in, or given rise to, the practice of one specific branch of scriptural exposition. We have seen that practice varying according to the disposition, judgment, and learning of various expositors. The severer standard adopted on this point by Calvin did not, as it has been partly shewn, meet with such general acceptance from the orthodox, as that milder and more fascinating, though perhaps more undefined, system, which admitted the employment of means certainly not ill adapted (especially when under the control of Christian sobriety and discretion) to attract the attention and promote the edification of those to whom our mi-



nistrations are addressed. Such appears to have been especially the feeling of those theologians who adhered to the Lutheran profession, though it were not difficult from among the followers of Calvin to adduce some instances, in which there was a wide and even most injudicious departure from the principles and practice of their master. On a general view however, there is no reason to disbelieve that the abuses of the allegorical method had been so exposed, and such cautions established, as to its validity and the propriety of its application, as abundantly to secure the doctrinal and practical theologians against any such expositions of this nature, as might be grossly injurious to the Christian faith, or derogatory to the honour of holy writ<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Bucer, Drusius, and D. Heinsius may be mentioned among those who objected to, or rather abstained from, the allegorical, and the excess even of the typical method. La Place, (Placæus,) on the contrary, (better known perhaps from his opinions concerning original sin,) has left us a typical exposition of part of the Book of Genesis, which for unrestrained licence of allegory is fully equal to any part of the patristical commentaries. Ernesti mentions Pelicanus, Œcolampadius, Musculus,

In our own country, both this feeling, and the partiality entertained by many of our most learned divines for the authority and opinions of the earlier fathers, seem to have subjected the practice of spiritual and mystical interpretation to such limits only, as the prudence and good taste of the teacher might suggest ; limits affecting perhaps rather the tone and character of the expositions, than the principles upon which they were grounded, or the extent to which they were carried. Neither will it be found, that any difference of opinion or practice on this head was produced by or connected with those disputes which unhappily subsisted between the established church and those who dissented, not so much from her doctrine, as from her observances and discipline. While Gouge, and many of his fellow-labourers, dwelt largely, and sometimes injudiciously, on the spiritual sense of Scripture, Bishop Field<sup>b</sup>, in discussing

and Rudinger, as cautious and temperate in their use of the mystical exposition. *Opp. Theol.* p. 469, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Field's (Bishop of Gloucester) *Treatise on the Church*, p. 369, ed. 3. 1635.

the subject, professedly appears disposed to follow, with very little of qualification, the method observed and prescribed by the fathers. Among those who dissented from the general faith of the protestant churches, the Socini, and their followers, from the very nature of their theological principles, though they do not appear openly to have impeached the truth of prophecies, or the inspiration of Scripture, were yet disposed to regard with a jealous eye that spiritual and even typical intention of much, which, so understood, they felt to be but little favourable to their own hypothesis, and to have sought an early refuge in that theory of accommodation which had originated in a very different quarter<sup>c</sup>.

The same tendency is objected also to those who, like the less enthusiastic among the anabaptists, held the tenets of Arianism<sup>d</sup>; and to these sectarians alone, until

<sup>c</sup> A sufficient view of their notions and practice on this subject may be obtained from the dissertation of T. Hackspan, *De Accommodatione*. (Opuscula, pp. 425, &c.)

<sup>d</sup> See F. Junii Loca S. S. *Parallela*, especially the Preface. It is almost needless to state, that the stricter anti-

the age of Grotius, it should appear, that we must look for any undue and injurious objections to the spiritual interpretation of God's word.

The example however of the early reformers, and the daily progress of literature and criticism, while they contributed in this, as in every other point of religious learning, to the improvement of the several protestant communions, were not without their influence even on the theologians of the Romish church. By the more learned of these, the fourfold division of the sense, so long adopted in all her systems and expositions, a division wanting even in logical accuracy, was no more insisted upon<sup>e</sup>, and no objection was made to any other

pædobaptist communities of the present day entertain on this and many other points opinions totally different.

<sup>e</sup> See Sixtinus Amama, *Antibarbarus Bibl.* p. 153. Thus the mystical system of S. Paguinus was qualified by the *Bibliotheca Sancta* of Sixtus Senensis, lib. 3. The latter work is well calculated to give a full and comprehensive view of the state of biblical literature among the Romanists of that age. (Venice, 1566, et postea sæpius.) The still more recent critics of that communion are known in many instances (as in that of Simon) to have adopted a yet laxer and less spiritual standard.

technical distribution (provided the existence of the secondary and spiritual meaning were not impeached) which might be deemed better calculated to facilitate the labours of the interpreter.

The most exceptionable use of the allegorical system was undoubtedly to be found among those persons, who from time to time addicted themselves to the study and cultivation of spiritual mysticism. Into the detail of their system, and history, (an history full of interest both for the divine and the philosopher,) neither our time nor our immediate object would permit us to enter. It is sufficient to notice, that, like their great masters of the Alexandrian school, they scrupled not to misapply (and that frequently with the visionary authority of teachers actually and personally inspired) the whole letter of Scripture to the support and illustration of their own obscure and untenable theories<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> The student will find an able section on the “scriptores mystici” in the *Isagoge* of Buddeus, already so often referred to. The more curious reader may inspect any of the mystic works of Paracelsus of J. Behmen, or Van Helmont, or the more intelligible treatise of P. Poi-

But it should not be omitted, that the earlier part of the seventeenth century produced, in the person of Glassius, a divine of the Lutheran communion, one of the ablest and most pious systematic writers, in every department of biblical criticism, who had as yet appeared in the Christian church. In the *Philologia Sacra* of this eminent author, a work which even at the present day cannot fail to convey much and solid information, and to edify by its piety, while it instructs by its erudition, the subject of allegorical, typical, and parabolical exposition is treated at much greater length, and with much greater precision, than it had been by any of those who preceded in the same career. Glassius distinctly separates the two former, and ob-

ret, *Epistola de Auctoribus Mysticis*. (De Eruditione, V. 2. Tract. 3. Apud Wetstein, 1707.) An admirable exposition and confutation of the philosophical doctrines held by the impurer mystics will be found in the letter of Gassendi against R. Fludd. (Paris, 1630.) The latest work of this character which I have inspected is the “*Témoignage d’un Enfant de la Vérité*.” (Berleburg, 1738.) The well known baron Swedenborg, so far as his theory is intelligible, seems entirely to agree with this school. His only claim to novelty is perhaps the notion of his own commission to institute an external church.



jects to those definitions which would confound them, a confusion (if such it be) not easily avoided. This he endeavours to obviate, by describing allegory as “the representation of some mystic or spiritual matter, (*rei*,) by some other related or mentioned in Scripture.” Yet in many such cases the latter might without any injury to language be denominated the type of the former; as the term *allegorical* might be with equal justice applied to much that we usually consider and describe rather as typical. It is among the highest merits of Glassius, that both in the allegory and type he is careful to make a broad distinction between that which has the direct authority of Scripture, (*innatus*,) and that which is suggested or inferred (*illatus*) merely by the pious sentiments of the expositor. His illustrations of the whole subject are copious, and in general highly pertinent; his cautions especially are strongly marked by good sense and judgment <sup>g</sup>.

<sup>g</sup> The theory of Glassius was adopted, with some modifications, by Waterland, whose exposition of it may be found (forming the Preface to his *Scripture Vindicated*)

But we now approach to a period at which the difference of opinion upon more important points of doctrine, if it did not actually produce, had at least a powerful effect in fostering and perpetuating a difference to the full as broadly marked in the interpretation of Scripture. With the history of the well known Arminian controversy, (a controversy which, originating within the walls of a single college, had, in the course of a few years, from the deep and permanent interest of the questions which it involved, attracted the notice and divided the opinions of nearly the whole protestant world,) we are not at present concerned. In respect to the immediate subject of our inquiry, it does not appear that Arminius himself had dissented in any measure from the more prudent expositors of his age and country. Admitting fully the existence of the typical and allegorical sense, he qualifies the admission by such cautions only as had the general concurrence of all sober and reasonable di-

in the 6th volume of the edition of his works for which we are indebted to Bishop Van Mildert.

vines<sup>h</sup>. Episcopius, the well known and able advocate of the Arminian tenets, though inclining more strongly to the literal and practical exposition, neither rejects the authority nor denies the value of that which is mystical and typical<sup>i</sup>. That to the spiritual application, properly so called, of Scripture, he was no enemy, may be seen at once by the perusal of his admirable Oration on the Construction and Constitution of our Lord's kingdom<sup>k</sup>.

But the author whose opinions or rather practice upon this point attracted a degree of notice and animadversion far beyond that which had been excited even by that of Calvin, was one who in this instance alone seems to have chosen the path of the great reformer. I allude to the illustrious and accomplished champion of the remonstrant cause, Hugo Grotius. In his Commentaries upon the Scriptures, especially upon those of the Old Testament, this emi-

<sup>h</sup> De Sensu et Interpret. S. S. Opp. p. 174. ed. 1635.

<sup>i</sup> Institt. Theol. lib. iii. cap. 13. Lectt. in Apocal. Opp. vol. ii. p. 550.

<sup>k</sup> Opp. vol. ii. p. 536.

nent scholar betrayed an attachment, perhaps somewhat excessive, to the more learned and temperate of the Jewish expositors; and, after their example, restricted to the immediate history of the chosen people many passages that had hitherto been more generally considered as prophetic of the Messiah and his kingdom. Hence he has been accused, with more petulance certainly than justice, of seeing Christ nowhere in the records of the older covenant. From this charge he has been ably defended by our own Hammond, and the inspection of his works will abundantly exculpate him. Many prophecies he applies directly to our Lord, nor does he deny the existence of a secondary and spiritual intention to much which he considers in its primary sense as historically or literally significant. Thus in treating on the immediate purport of the 15th Psalm <sup>m</sup>, he adds explicitly, “*Latet sensus mysticus et sublimis ut in plerisque Psalmis.*” From his treatise too, written

<sup>m</sup> Verse x.

in opposition to the Socinian heresy, on the satisfaction made by our Redeemer, it is evident that he was fully convinced of the reality of the great apparatus of typical and spiritual prefiguration, by which it pleased the Almighty to shadow out the future blessings of the Messiah's work and government. And in his Commentary on the New Testament he does not scruple to regard the miraculous cures performed by our Lord as symbolical of his higher and more glorious offices in the restitution of our spiritual health and life<sup>n</sup>. That in some instances he followed his Jewish guides too implicitly, and to the exclusion perhaps of interpretations of a more reasonable character and more valuable tendency, it has been already conceded; that his taste for classical literature betrayed him frequently into illustrations drawn

<sup>n</sup> Ann. on Matth. viii. 17. “Sicut veterum res gestæ rerum Christi figuram habuerunt, ita et ipsius Christi actiones aliæ aliis denotandis inservierunt. Nam beneficium corporibus redditæ sanitatis quam figuram remissionis peccatorum et sanctarum mentium tulerit, *dubitari non potest.*” (Apud Rambach de Sensus Mystici Criteriis, p. 22.)

from this favourite source, which (not to insist upon their being occasionally calculated to mislead the student) were at least inapplicable and unprofitable, it is not denied<sup>o</sup>; that his theological system (though with this we are not immediately concerned) had very considerable, perhaps irremediable defects, the observant and well-grounded Christian will not be disposed to question<sup>p</sup>. But his memory has perhaps

<sup>o</sup> See on this subject Mosheim, *Diss. de Interpr. S. S.* an essay written with his usual learning and good sense.

<sup>p</sup> For refusing to consider the whole Roman priesthood as the ministers of Antichrist, he has been accused of popery. Though he wrote expressly against Socinus on the subject of atonement, he has been called a Socinian. Calvin went yet further, and stigmatized the author of the treatise *De Veritate* (on what grounds I know not) as an atheist. See Weisman, *Hist. Eccles.* vol. ii. p. 950. I would take this opportunity of observing, that they who have seen cause to regret that the History of Mosheim presents rather an external than internal view of the church of Christ, and who perceive that the pious Milner did not altogether possess the extent of information or the freedom from party spirit requisite for his undertaking, will find in the *History of Weisman* (2 vols. 4to. Halæ, 1745.) both the piety of the latter, and the historical fullness and accuracy of the former. On the subject of Grotius, see also Ernesti, *Opusc. Theol.* p. 477.



on every point been, in many quarters, subjected to unjust and unchristian aspersions. However opinions may be divided on the character of his Annotations, (Annotations which, it should be remembered, do not, especially in the case of the Old Testament, profess to exhibit a paraphrase, or even a perpetual commentary upon the text,) it is neither true nor charitable to affirm, that they bear no reference to Him who was the completion of the Law and the Prophets. We may at least admit in his defence that which an able and tolerant author of the fifth century urged on behalf of Theodorus; “*Consequens non est ut evacuet omnes in Christum factas prophetias, qui aliqua mystice in eum dicta moraliter quoque recte tractaverit*”<sup>q</sup>.

But it was not long before the system of biblical interpretation adopted by Grotius met, in the person of Cocceius, with an opponent, whose erudition, industry, piety, and powers of language and imagination, were equalled only by the intrepidity with

<sup>q</sup> Facundus Hermianensis in Def. 3 Capit. l. iii. c. 4.

which he hazarded and maintained a system of mystical and spiritual exposition and application, almost equally vague and licentious, if not equally mischievous, with that of Origen and his wildest followers. The fundamental principles of this system have been described as contained in the single assertion, *That the Scripture signifies whatsoever it can signify, (quicquid potest significare.)* This assertion however some of his followers are said to have disclaimed: in fact (as Limborch has seen) the position itself is highly ambiguous, and might, according to the sense attached by each to the words *potest* and *significare*, be assented to by persons of opinions diametrically opposite on the point in question<sup>r</sup>. But whatever may have been the exact logical form in which Cocceius would have defined his own views<sup>s</sup>, it is evident from his

<sup>r</sup> Limborch, Theol. Christ. lib. i. cap. ix. sect. 10. who, in his own sense, (assuredly not that of Cocceius,) professes his full assent to the formula.

<sup>s</sup> “Impossibile est” (are the words of Cocceius himself) “aliquid fieri in mundo de quo verba Spiritus Sancti usurpari *possunt*, ut id non *intuitus* sit Spiritus S. loquens in prophetis, et non *voluerit* legentem ea

practice, that he did not scruple to regard whatsoever spiritual sense the pious and orthodox Christian could attach to any portion or expression, (of the Old Testament at least,) as the real intention of the Spirit, by whose agency those Scriptures were given as preparatory to, and illustrative of, the yet higher gift of a Saviour. That his own exemplifications of this theory are frequently as puerile as its principle is untenable; that, like most other sanguine advocates of the mystic sense, he uses it occasionally to the support of his own peculiar opinions, and yet more frequently to the uncertain and visionary application of the

“*verba ei rei accommodare.*” (Cocceius ap. Wetstein, *Libelli in Crisin N. T.* ed. Semler, p. 144.) This is little more than the transcript of a canon already quoted from Augustin. The reader will perceive that the identity of divine *foreknowledge* and *predestination* is here pressed, to an extent scarcely usual even in the school to which Cocceius belonged.

For my knowledge of the system and practice of Cocceius, I am indebted to the inspection of his *Commentaries on the lesser Prophets*, of the *Explicatio vocum typico-propheticarum* of N. Gurtler, (a dictionary of the Cocceian expositions,) and to the perusal of some works by his imitators the elder Vitranga, Lampe, and Cremer and Ewald.

prophetic details to persons and events in which few others have been content to recognise their fulfilment, even they who were not indisposed to some indulgence of spiritual accommodation have long since been constrained to admit: but the student who looks to find in his Commentaries nothing more than a mere wild and fanatical perversion of the sacred text, will be greatly, and, if he peruse them with candid and Christian feelings, not unpleasingly disappointed. In the power of explaining Scripture by Scripture, and in his constant attention to the spiritual edification of his readers, he exhibits much that must command our attention and respect; nor can it be objected to him, (as we have seen it objected to the spiritual expositors of an earlier age,) that he was driven to this resource by any ignorance of the original language and history, or any impatience of mental labour. Frequently he shews himself an adversary not unworthy even of Grotius; and though it is to be regretted that his language in speaking of that great man is tinged with an unwarrantable acrimony

and want of charity, his opinions on more than one question of prophetic and typical interpretation will probably meet with the preference of those, who do not wish to subject its practice to the most rigorous and perhaps useless restrictions.

Had the case been otherwise, it were difficult indeed to account for the ready and long continued partiality which the Cocceian system experienced at the hands of so many, whose learning and talents promoted, during the end of the 17th and the greater part of the 18th century, the credit of their national church and the edification of the Christian world. It is certainly among the leading, though not perhaps altogether the most valuable characteristics of Vitringa, of Lampe, and of Venema<sup>t</sup>,

<sup>t</sup> The reader may inspect the Preface of Vitringa to his *Isaiah*, the *Typus Doctrinæ Propheticae*, the *Dissertationes* on the Cherubim and Wheels of Ezekiel, on the Tree of Knowledge, on the Sephiroth, &c. in the *Obs. Sacræ*; the posthumous dissertation entitled, *Theologia Symbolica*, and the 12th chapter especially of the *Methodus Homiletica* of the same writer; the *Comment.* in *Psalmos Graduum*, and the *Dissertation De Scala Jacobi* of Lampe, and the *Prolegomena* to the *Methodus Prophetica* of Venema. Ample specimens of the Cocceian

that they adhere closely on this point to the spirit of Cocceius. I speak not this in depreciation or discommendation of those learned and pious teachers: the instructed Christian, while he may easily separate and exercise his own right of judgment on that which he feels objectionable on the score of doctrinal severity or critical inaccuracy, can yet seldom rise from the perusal of their works without a rich accession of biblical knowledge and Christian improvement.

It was not to be expected that the Remonstrants, either from the general character of their theological views, or from the feelings with which they were but too naturally inclined to regard their Calvinistic adversaries, should do otherwise than op-

method may also be found in the *Antiquitates Theol. Typicæ* of Cremer, and the *Symbolical Dissertations* of Ewaldus. Venema's work was written so late as 1775. An exposition of the defects of this school, not so unjust in its affirmations as discreditable from the spirit and tone in which it is written, will be found in the *Entretiens sur les différentes Méthodes des Cocceiens et Voetiens*, (Amsterdam, 1707.) See Waterland's opinion of Vitringa, *Works*, vol. vi. pp. 18, 19.



pose that theory of interpretation which had been in the first instance opposed to themselves. This appears to have been done, however, with very different degrees of judgment and moderation (and perhaps with very different intentions) by different members of their party. Some are accused, not unjustly, of defending the exclusive use of the literal sense, in the design of recommending opinions but little short of Socinianism<sup>u</sup>. Others, though not averse to the temperate use of the spiritual exposition, or to many of the great fundamental truths which it is eminently calculated to illustrate and enforce, protested only against the extravagant excess of the Cocceian school, and the palpable want of candour and charity which subjected all those who did not concur in that excess to the charge of being themselves averse and dead to spiritual feeling. Of this latter class the stu-

<sup>u</sup> “Hodie modus quandoque nullus est in asserendo  
 “Socinismo directe in probatis dogmatibus et scripturis  
 “S. Vet. et Nov. Testamenti, obtentu sensus literalis, in  
 “Anti-Trinitariorum ac Rationalistarum sensum in-  
 “flexis.” Spanheim, Elenchus Controv. cum Armin. p.  
 243. ed. 1694.

dent may form an accurate estimate, from the inspection of that portion of the “Theologia Christiana” of the well-known P. à Limborch<sup>x</sup> which is dedicated expressly to our present subject<sup>y</sup>. It cannot, he affirms, (*illud certum*,) be denied, that, especially in the prophetical and typical parts of the Old Testament, there does exist a secondary and spiritual sense, developing itself more clearly to the intellect of the believer, in proportion as the things spoken bear a less immediate relation to the type itself than to its completion. He admits that the same paragraph contains, occasionally, matter partly referring to the type, partly to the antitype<sup>z</sup>; and in cases where

<sup>x</sup> “Absit” (adds the author just quoted, with a feeling highly creditable to himself) “ut his implicemus, si qui in causa de S. Trinitate, de vera Deitate Christi, Filiatione vera, vero in terris sacerdotio, vero λότρω ab eo persoluto, et morte nostri loco suscepta (*satisfactio- nis adeo re, si non nomine*) Socinismi notam ingenue deprecantur; quos inter apparuit nuper Phil. à Limborch, vir clarissimus.” (Spanheim, eodem loco.)

<sup>y</sup> Theolog. Christ. lib. i. c. 9. De Interpretatione.

<sup>z</sup> “Admiscentur prophetiis nonnunquam aliqua ad typum solum spectantia. Ita 2 Samuel. vii. 12—14. de Christo; 14, 15. de solo Salomone. Proceditur etiam

prophecies, which might otherwise be overlooked, or understood as bearing reference to the temporal fortunes and restoration only of Israel <sup>a</sup>, are applied by the inspired writers of the New Testament to the mission of our Lord and the preaching of his Gospel, he appears fully content so to understand and receive them without any reference to that theory of accommodation, which, if not altogether untenable, is liable at all events to constant and dangerous perversion <sup>b</sup>. He censures only the violence done to the sacred text, by extorting from it at every step prophetic and spiritual

“ a typo ad antitypum solum, ita ut vel istius temporis  
 “ fideles magis aliquod perspicerent.”

<sup>a</sup> “ Quæ in typo plene comperta.”

<sup>b</sup> On this subject, already touched upon in the commencement of these Lectures, the student may safely be referred to the arguments and authorities adduced in the excellent work of Rambach, *Hermeneutica Sacra*, pp. 155 et seq. In his general view, however, of the mystical sense, Rambach assuredly exceeds the bounds of sober criticism; and his censures on Grotius and Limborch are rather applicable to the laxer school of Le Clerc. This work, however, and his dissertation *De Sensu Mystico*, are well worth the perusal. Mr. Horne, in his very useful and comprehensive Introduction, has made much use of Rambach.

meanings which were unauthorized by its obvious scope and tendency, and could in no case possess any doctrinal or argumentative value, even for those who admitted the very principles out of which they arose. That views, which to a sober-minded Christian would not appear to contain any thing derogatory to the inspiration or prophetic character of Scripture, should have drawn (as he openly complains) upon himself, and those who thought with him, the charge of actual impiety, seems the more unreasonable, as he might with justice have retorted, that his concessions on this point were much more liberal, and his language as to the writers of the New Testament much more guarded, than those of the great reformer, whose general system of theological opinions was so warmly espoused and defended by his accusers. It is not however to be questioned, that many among the Remonstrants were far from imitating the pious and Christian reverence with which Limborch, after the example of his predecessors Arminius and Grotius, was disposed to regard and treat the inspired word. Some of

them inclined, on various points, much more decidedly to the Socinian scheme ; and these found, so far at least as our present subject is concerned, a popular and indefatigable champion in the well-known Le Clerc. This ingenious but often injudicious writer, disposed to question almost every opinion which had received the sanction of his predecessors, and constantly mistaking boldness and novelty of assertion for liberality and freedom from prejudice, not only rejected those spiritual expositions of the Old Testament which were not immediately confirmed by the authority of the New, but carried his notions of accommodation to such an excess, as nearly to invalidate the prophetic character of the former, and indirectly at least to depreciate the divine authority of the latter, and of him who was its minister<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> See Rambach, *Inst. Herm.* p. 156. (note.) “Clericus” (says Eichstadt, in his preface to the *Hermeneutica* of Morus) “*imprimis facem in Hermeneuticis prætulit.*” The reader acquainted with the principles of the modern German school will be at no loss to understand the drift and value of this commendation.

The example of Le Clerc, aided perhaps but too much by the palpable excesses of the Cocceian school, gradually found many imitators in nearly all the churches of continental Europe. In the mystical interpretation of Scripture, no other Calvinistic communion had perhaps at any time so far departed from the severity of their great master, as that whose schools were chiefly led and influenced by the followers of Cocceius<sup>d</sup>. With respect to those which had always been disposed to follow Calvin himself on this point, it was scarcely to be expected that their sentiments or practice as to scriptural interpretation would undergo any change from that silent but fatal approximation to a system little short of philosophical scepticism, which has from various causes been produced even in the very cradles and schools of the protestant reformation. The divines of the Lutheran school, who appear to have retained a more uni-

<sup>d</sup> The younger Turretin, Wytttenbach, Zimmerman, and Werenfels, all afford examples of the more restricted and cautious (perhaps occasionally too cautious) admission of the secondary and spiritual sense.



form attachment to the use of the allegorical method, (guarded as it had been by Melancthon and others against any serious or considerable perversion,) were more backward to surrender the spiritual and typical character of the Old Testament, especially to those whom they saw eager to obtrude their innovations into every department of theology. Some among these appear to have inclined to the opinion, (an opinion at least highly probable,) that there is, strictly speaking, no mystical or allegorical sense in Scripture, but such as is contained in or subordinate to the typical<sup>e</sup>; but in their concessions, as to the extent of the typical itself, to have differed but little from the general principles of Glassius. The celebrated Ernesti, without impeaching the divine and prophetic character, or opposing in any

<sup>e</sup> M. Œder, *Obs. Sac.* 1729. p. 749. et *Diss.* 8. I have not seen his treatise “*De Sensu Mystico.*” Carpzov, Bengel, Buddeus, and Rambach (see the *Institt. Theol.* of the former, in the section on the Interpretation of Scripture, and the *Hermeneutica Sacra* of the latter) appear disposed to indulge to themselves and others a very considerable latitude in the expository use of the mystic sense, however obtained.

great and fundamental points of doctrine the Christian interpretation of Scripture, adopted more rigorous principles of literal and historical criticism<sup>f</sup>. With Ernesti may be classed the historian Mosheim, and perhaps the well-known Michaelis. Had the career of critical refinement upon this and upon other points terminated here, we might perhaps have claimed for ourselves somewhat more of Christian liberty in the spiritual exposition and application of Scripture, but could not have found any serious cause for reprehension or complaint.

But that more lax and more sceptical system, both of scriptural interpretation and of doctrinal theology in general, which the example of Le Clerc and his followers had recommended directly to his own, and in-

<sup>f</sup> The student, probably acquainted long since with the *Instit. Interp. N. T.* of this writer, may find a yet further illustration of his sentiments in the dissertation already alluded to, *De Interpretat. Prophet. Messian.* The *Elementa Theol. Didact.* and yet rather the dissertation *De Interpretat. et Emend. S. Litt.* (*Diss. ad Sanct. Discipl.* pp. 204, &c.) will give the opinions of Mosheim. Those of Michaelis may be found in his *Elements of Theology*.

directly to some other Christian communities, was now introduced into, and we might almost say imposed upon, the theological schools of the Lutheran church, by the labours and authority of the learned and indefatigable Semler. Possessed of an erudition on almost every subject of biblical criticism and ecclesiastical history, beyond that which was usually acquired even by the proverbially industrious scholars of his own country; with considerable acuteness, rather than comprehensiveness or depth of intellect; with an attachment to that which he esteemed the more philosophical and liberal view of the Christian dispensation, which rendered him sufficiently illiberal in his own critiques and sarcasms on those from whom he differed; with a disposition in all cases rather to question and overturn the decisions of others, than to establish any clear and tangible principles of his own, Semler aspired at remodelling every branch of theological study, and becoming the founder and oracle of a new and more philosophic school. With all the ostentatious pretence however of a reformer and

a discoverer, he was in truth but little entitled to the praise of originality, either in the conception or execution of his numerous and somewhat desultory performances. All, or nearly all, the essential elements of his system, or rather of the objections which he made to the system usually acquiesced in by his countrymen, are drawn from the Arian and Socinian writers of other nations; sometimes, it should seem, from sources yet more objectionable<sup>g</sup>. In depreciating the inspiration and prophetic character of the Old Testament, and pronouncing all the references made to it by our blessed Lord and disciples to have been the mere result of a compliance with the false and rabbinical theories of their unenlightened countrymen<sup>h</sup>, in rejecting all spi-

<sup>g</sup> See his edition of the “*Philosophia Scripturæ Interpretēs*,” a work at one time attributed to, and scarcely unworthy of, the notorious Spinoza.

<sup>h</sup> It were easy to quote many passages to this intention from various works. Our immediate object however will be answered by the inspection of his *Apparat. ad lib. V. et N. T. Interpret.* vol. i. p. 229. 359. and vol. ii. p. 191. He has the unfairness to assert, that Calvin and Grotius, as well as Le Clerc, held opinions similar to his

ritual exposition and application whatsoever of the Law and the Prophets, Semler persuaded numerous divines, who were anxious for the reputation of philosophical reasoners, to follow, and very speedily indeed to outstrip his footsteps. The process by which these reasoners have changed the whole face of scriptural interpretation is simple and expeditious, although it may to the enlightened Christian appear no more satisfactory in its proofs and principles, than it is beneficial in its results. Because the allegorical and spiritual methods have been frequently exaggerated and misused, they are, it was argued, to be discarded altogether. The doctrine of *accommodation* once employed for this purpose, and fully admitted as legitimate, was easily extended to all that had hitherto been considered as typical. All the prophecies of secondary intention were thus ques-

own. Even the third of these would have hesitated, and the second would undoubtedly have refused to accompany him in the full range of his critical scepticism. From the first he would most probably have experienced much harsher usage.

tioned and invalidated; there remained then only those few which were still admitted to be historically and obviously referable to Christ alone. But as long as one even of these remained undisputed, so long the proper inspiration of the prophetic books must be conceded; and the authority of him in whom that one was fulfilled, and who applied and taught his disciples to apply not only that one, but many others, to himself and his kingdom, might justly be urged against the assailant. No resource therefore was left, but to deny at once and *in toto* the prophetic character of the Old Testament; and to attribute boldly that which had hitherto been considered as such, to the mere ordinary operation of natural and moral causes. But our time will not permit us (nor indeed is the task such as to present any temptation to a Christian mind) to trace in its longer details the almost general and utter dereliction of Christian faith and doctrine, which has ensued in this and in every other school where the same pretended rationality has superseded, I will not say only



the ancient and universal teaching of the church, but the plain and obvious declarations and pretensions of those through whose agency the word and will of God was revealed to man. For our present purpose it has been sufficiently noticed in a former Lecture; nor should I have ventured to press the subject even thus much upon your attention, were it not for the conviction, that they who are anxious to pursue on any extensive scale the studies often requisite for, and always creditable to, the ministerial profession, are, on minor points especially of biblical criticism and ecclesiastical history, led almost of necessity to seek for information in many works deeply and uniformly tinged with the spirit of a theory, which would reduce the eternal records of God's grace and wisdom to a level with the Shaster of the bramin, or the Cyropædia of the philosopher<sup>i</sup>.

<sup>i</sup> There have not, however, been wanting some (though comparatively few) who have faithfully withstood the innovations in question. Professor Knapp, of Halle, (a name already honourably known to our own church,) and Storr, of Tübingen, may be noticed. Those of Seiler, Jacobi, and

With the various shades and fluctuations of opinion which on this, as on many subjects of theological speculation, have obtained in our own country, most students are in all probability too intimately acquainted to derive much of information from such an outline as it is permitted us to draw within the limits of the present discourse. And here too we are partly impeded from the want of those materials with which the history of other European churches so abundantly supplies us. The English divines who established and defended the faith of the Reformation during the reigns of Elizabeth and her successors, able and distinguished as many of them were both for depth and originality of thought, and extent of learning, were content to remain indebted either to the venerable remains of the earlier fathers, or to the labours of foreign scholars, for works expressly and systematically written on the criticism and interpretation of the Scrip-

Munter are mentioned by others, but with their writings I am not acquainted. It were unjustifiable to omit the church of the *Unitas Fratrum*.

tures<sup>i</sup>. This is not however to be regarded as arising from any want of knowledge or industry on their parts: their attention was daily called to matters of yet more primary and immediate consequences. Many of them produced commentaries and expositions on various parts of Scripture, distinguished as well for their erudition, as for their practical and spiritual utility: and no less an authority than Bacon himself has pronounced, of those who adorned his own and the preceding generation, that “if the

<sup>i</sup> It may be observed, that Bishop Wilkins, in his List of Works on the Interpretation of Scripture, (Ecclesiastes, p. 51. ed. 1679.) on Scriptural Allegories and Figures, (p. 56.) does not give the name of a single English author. In Vertue’s Parallels, (London, 1658,) a work well calculated to give a general notion of the manner and principle of those who allowed themselves the fullest latitude of typical application, the following authors (English) only are referred to. Ainsworth, (the well-known Hebraist and commentator on the Pentateuch,) Brightman, (on the Canticles,) Broughton, (the great rabbinical scholar,) Cartwright, (the eminent and learned puritan,) Gouge and Sibbs, (also puritans,) Mason and Pemble, (church of England,) Weemse, (church of Scotland.) “I do not at present recollect” (Waterland writes, at a yet later day,) “whether any of our English writers have “professedly handled this subject.” Preface to Scripture Vindicated, p. 1.

“ choice and best observations which have  
“ been made dispersedly in our English  
“ sermons (leaving out the largeness of ex-  
“ hortations and applications thereupon)  
“ had been set down in a continuance, it  
“ would be the best work in divinity that  
“ hath been written since the apostles’  
“ times<sup>k</sup>.”

In this deficiency of more immediate and direct evidence as to the received theory of spiritual application, it may be fairly argued, from the general tone and tenor observable in their practical and controversial writings, that the higher luminaries of our rising church, while they fully admitted those typical applications of Scripture which were in that age questioned only by the open advocates of Arius and Socinus, were fully aware of, and studious to avoid, the dangerous and enthusiastic practice of seeking in every portion of God’s word for some mystic and recondite intimation of a prophetic or spiritual nature, which might with equal facility be elicited from any other preceptive or narrative work of any

<sup>k</sup> Bp. Wilkins, Ecclesiastes, p. 82.

age, country, or language whatsoever. The expositions of Jewel and of Hooker, for instance, are as remarkable for their general tone of right reason and sobriety, as they are for their tendency and power to instruct and build up the Christian in the faith and knowledge of his Lord and Redeemer<sup>1</sup>. Some, indeed, from a strong predilection to the studies of rabbinical literature, and to the method as well as the authority of the fathers, were not indisposed to admit many fanciful and unfounded expositions derived from these sources. But the most extravagant and objectionable use of the interpretation, in this case at least falsely termed spiritual, was undoubtedly to be found among those more enthusiastic advocates of puritanism, who applied not only to the progress of the *internal* church, but to the fortunes and privileges of their own *external* communion, the promises, the

<sup>1</sup> It may be added, that a fair and ready criterion of the extent to which the Elizabethan divines admitted the allegorical and typical methods, may be obtained from an inspection of the titles and marginal references affixed to their editions of the Bible.

types, and the history of Scripture, until their abuse of its sacred text became, as it were, a by-word and a proverb, and literally converted the schools of the prophets into the seminaries of dissension, violence, and bloodshed. That the various fanatical and mystical sects who sprung up during the eventful and stirring season of the great rebellion should (when they chanced to appeal to Scripture rather than to their own supposed inspiration) have usually so distorted and allegorized its obvious meaning, as to afford some colour and patronage to their own visionary notions, might reasonably be anticipated, and will be readily confirmed by the inspection of such of their works as have escaped the oblivion into which the greater part of them have long since fallen. Neither can we be astonished, that, after the restoration, the learned and illustrious race of divines who had witnessed these extravagancies, and who, with but few exceptions, had embraced the tenets and views of the Arminian school, should have regarded with somewhat even of suspicion and jealousy, a mode



of interpretation liable to such ready and dangerous perversion.

They who, like the eloquent and learned Taylor, permitted themselves occasionally the indulgence of such licence, were probably betrayed into it rather by the fervency and fertility of their imagination, and their fondness for and imitation of the patristical homilies, than by any false principles of biblical criticism<sup>m</sup>. The general character however of scriptural exposition was, and remained for many years, in our own church, I do not say the denial and rejection of all secondary and spiritual senses, but the over timid and and cautious

<sup>m</sup> Taylor has left his systematic opinions as to this subject on record in his sermon on the ministerial duties. (Works, vol. vi. p. 513.) They are by no means so lax, as from some of his oratorical applications we might conjecture. Speaking of the conjectural allegories of some, he observes, with as much strength as truth, "*Of these things there is no beginning and no end, no certain principles, and no good conclusion.*" A very singular attempt to restore the patristical mode of allegory in its full extent was made in the Bibliotheca Biblica of Parker; (A. D. 1720-25.) which however does not appear to have met with any success. It is a work by no means of scarce occurrence, and may serve to give those who have not the opportunity of consulting the original authorities a general view of that method and its usual application.

abstinence from a means which, when opportunely and judiciously used, may be rendered, under God's blessing, no ineffectual instrument for the enlivening the devotion and promoting the edification of the Christian. It is not however meant to insinuate, for the insinuation would be palpably untrue, that any doubts were entertained or expressed as to the typical and prophetical intention of many parts of the older covenant, of those especially which come to us ratified by the authority as well as fulfilled by the history of the newer. Even the illustrious Locke<sup>n</sup> (I select purposely a commentator the most unlikely to have yielded to any opinion which he deemed fanciful or unreasonable) fully admits its reality, and the validity of the arguments deducible from the use made of it by the apostle Paul. It does not indeed appear that this part of the divine economy was questioned among ourselves, until the rise of that which has been denominated the Hoadleian school. Most of the supporters of this active and ingenious, though unsound theologian, were

<sup>n</sup> Commentary on Romans iii. 25. note *c*. and v. 14. 15. (Paraphrase.) cap. vi. (Summary.)

disposed to concede to human reason sacrifices which (when confined within her proper limits) she neither does nor can demand of revelation. Sykes especially, partly from his admiration of his continental masters of the Arian and Socinian schools, partly from a wish perhaps to cut short or evade at any expense the subtleties and sophisms of the infidel Collins, is well known, both in his answer to that writer, and in his elaborate Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, to have surrendered the whole scheme of typical prefiguration and of secondary prophecy as destitute of all real proof and foundation; and accommodated to the mission and circumstances of our Lord and his disciples, in condescension only to the reigning prejudices of the Jewish people. The opinions of this school did not, we would trust, ever obtain widely among ourselves; and at this day no ministers of our Zion would, I believe, be found to avow or to harbour them. It is not however the less certain, that there was a time when, both on this and on subjects of yet higher importance, the tenets of

Hoadly and of Sykes had more than one advocate even in the bosom of a church, from which unquestionably such reasoners would have done more faithfully and conscientiously in withdrawing themselves.

In the mean time, that class of dissenters from our church who retained the doctrine and discipline of Calvinism, or of Independency, retained also (partly from the imitation of their earlier teachers, partly perhaps from that of the Cocceian school) an habit of unrestrained indulgence in spiritual and mystical exposition, which many of their more acute and learned successors of a more modern age would scarcely admit or extenuate, and which they not unfrequently employed in such a manner as was by no means calculated to diminish, in the minds of more informed and sober inquirers after evangelical truth, the suspicion with which their predecessors had caused the allegorical method to be pretty generally regarded °.

° Instances of this excess abound in the “Parables” and “Tropology” of Keach, in the “Sacred Tropology” of Brown, and in the “Christ Revealed” of T. Taylor.

Some too among those pious and conscientious men, who thought with the non-jurors of the rebellion, appear to have been by no means indisposed to those mystical expositions which had the sanction of the fathers. But the most singular instance presented by the last century of a return in our own church to the consideration (not perhaps altogether uncalled for) of the typical and spiritual import of many prominent portions of holy writ, is undoubtedly to be found in the rise and progress of the opinions usually termed (after the name of their first promulgator) Hutchinsonian. The pious and ingenious, though highly fanciful, supporters of these tenets, while, in affixing with the most liberal and, it must be confessed, uncritical profusion mystical and spiritual meanings to the general text, and even to most individual words and expressions of holy Scripture, they followed the example of their numerous predecessors in the same career, added to the theory of those predecessors one tenet perfectly, I am disposed to believe, novel, and peculiar to themselves. They who

had in an earlier day mingled the studies of philosophy with those of theology, had endeavoured to strain and pervert the sacred text to the mystic adumbration of their own peculiar theories°. But the school of Hutchinson, with an intention certainly more reverential, if not more reasonable, sought to find in the Mosaic records a true and divinely inspired system of physical as well as of spiritual truth, and to apply those records in that which they believed to be their real and original, though recondite sense, to the correction of all philosophical theories of mere human invention. They appear also to have held, that all natural objects whatsoever, those perhaps especially the names of which are metaphorically used in Scripture, have a preordained connexion with, and are thus designed as permanent and intelligible witnesses to, the existence of their several divine and spiritual antitypes.

° These had in this later age been imitated by Burnet, and that which Waterland terms with sufficient aptness the *mythic* school.



Upon the obvious defects of this system it is unnecessary to dwell ; but it should in candour be added, (and the assertion may be made without the fear of contradiction,) that to the theological labours of this school our church is indebted for no trifling or inconsiderable benefits. Its advocates earnestly recommended and diligently practised the study of the sacred language, the comparison of Scripture with Scripture, the investigation of the typical character of the elder covenant, and the perfect and universal spirituality of the new ; that they never lost sight of the soundness of Christian doctrine, or the necessity of grounding evangelical practice upon evangelical principles. It cannot be remembered indeed without gratitude, that their views of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations were the views of men of no common intellects or attainments ; that to this source, under one yet higher, we owe the Christian spirit which attracts and delights and edifies in the pure and affectionate ministrations of Horne, which instructs and

convinces in the energetic and invaluable labours of Horsley <sup>P</sup>.

We have now arrived at a period, when the further condition of spiritual interpretation may be fairly regarded as matter of criticism rather than of history. Some allusions to the character which it has assumed, and the extent to which it has been practised, in yet more recent times, must of necessity be interwoven with the observations on its proper grounds and limitations, which will form the subject of our concluding Lecture.

<sup>P</sup> My knowledge of the Hutchinsonian tenets is derived chiefly from the works of Jones, and from some Latin treatises on the theory drawn up, if I am not mistaken, by Catcott.

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## LECTURE VIII.

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PROVERBS iv. 27.

*Turn not unto the right hand nor to the left.*

IN the attempt which has been made to trace from its first origin until the present day the history and various modifications of the allegorical and spiritual exposition of the sacred volume, our attention has hitherto been directed to certain points which may, I trust, be assumed, in the present discourse, as needing no further proof or confirmation. First, it has been shewn, that such a sense is in many parts of Scripture coexistent with and subordinate to the letter; and that this is not only established by the express authority of the inspired records themselves, (and not lightly therefore to be questioned by any one who truly believes in their real and immediate inspiration,) but is not in the abstract liable to

any objections drawn from its improbability or unreasonableness, as a method of conveying to and impressing upon the human mind the great truths which concern our peace and salvation. It has been further shewn, that with a very few, and those perhaps very questionable exceptions, such has been, until within the last age, the opinion of all those who have accepted and acquiesced in the doctrines of revelation. Nor can it have been unobserved, that, until within the same period, theologians even of the highest and most justly deserved reputation have erred in this point rather on the side of excess than of deficiency; that meanings of a spiritual nature have been systematically sought for even in portions of holy writ, where no reasonable and sober-minded believer could (we would think) from its simple and obvious tenor have anticipated their existence, and pursued and multiplied to an extent as unsafe as it was uncritical. At the same time it must have been remarked, that a considerable check to the delusion and injury which (as in the case of the impurer mysticism) might

be expected to result from so lax and erroneous a standard of interpretation, has been very generally found, in the admission, that nothing is to be regarded as spiritually concealed beneath the veil of the letter, which is not already, upon the authority of its express and unquestioned purport, accepted and agreed to as matter of Christian faith and doctrine; and that even in this case the secondary sense cannot be considered as having in itself the force and validity of argumentative proof.

It now remains for us to inquire, (so far as the limits of this discourse allow,) what may fairly be considered as the legitimate extent to which the Christian teacher is entitled to avail himself, either in his public ministrations, or in the professed and systematic exposition of holy writ, of the resources offered by this method.

And here at the first outset I would premise, on the one hand, that I now address myself to those only who fully acknowledge the inspiration, and are content to admit in their clear and obvious meaning the pretensions and reasonings of our blessed

Lord and his immediate followers. On the other, I would bespeak the candid allowance, and (if I be in error) the pardon of those pious and spiritually minded Christians, to whom I may appear, in any manner or measure, to derogate from the importance and dignity of Scripture, or to diminish its applicability to the purposes of instruction and edification in the faith. In contemplating, however, the gradual development of and preparation for the great work of our redemption, in comparing the evidently temporal and imperfect nature of the first covenant, and the spiritual and moral blemishes permitted to remain under that covenant, with the pure and sanctifying influences of light and life vouchsafed under the new, and in the full admission and acceptance of the testimony which the latter gives to many prophetic and figurative intimations of the former, it is, I trust, by no means impossible to see, truly and beneficially to see, in both, him we acknowledge, equally with those who indulge in the widest range of allegory, to be the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets. It



is not, we hope, to be denied, that they who are thus minded, may be in their heart and spirit as firmly intent upon the things of his kingdom, as though they believed that every phrase and expression of the Scriptures was ordained and chosen and framed with a mystical and enigmatical view to its description and prefigurement.

It has been repeatedly urged in the course of these Lectures, (and I would not therefore at this moment detain you by entering more fully upon the question,) that it does not appear reasonable, I would even say, logically possible, for those who do acknowledge the real and immediate inspiration of Scripture, to evade the acknowledgment also of a secondary and spiritual sense actually existing in those portions of the Old Testament so quoted or alluded to in the New, that even though we admit some few passages (and this perhaps were best abstained from) to be thus accommodated or *deflected* (as Calvin has expressed it) to a purport foreign to their original intention, no Christian could, we

should think, either justify himself or benefit others in the universal application of a theory so palpably derogatory, in its first and most immediate deductions, to the honour of the Gospel and its divine Author. I would now only observe, that in more than one instance the supposed necessity for having recourse to this theory has arisen only from the apprehension, that matters quoted or referred to by the apostles, and even by our Lord himself, merely in illustration of their precepts or warnings, were adduced by them, and to be regarded therefore by ourselves, as having a character originally symbolical or typical. To confine ourselves to a single case. Our blessed Lord, in warning his disciples that they hold themselves in faithful and constant preparation for the great day of his coming, illustrates the suddenness of that coming, and the destruction in which it shall involve the careless and impenitent, by a natural and striking reference to the condition of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot, and those of the whole earth in the days of Noah. In

that part of this awful denunciation which appears to bear an immediate and primary reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, *He that is in the field* (it is said) *let him not return back. Remember Lot's wife.* Upon this allusion, Glassius (whose labours we have already noticed, and who may certainly be regarded in general as a temperate and cautious expositor) insists as a proof of the allegorical (he might equally well have named it the typical) intention of this and other passages of the Old Testament. It were not difficult to multiply instances where matter applied merely as illustrative of the case or argument in hand, has been considered, without any adequate reason, as possessing originally a typical or prospective character.

In pursuing our subject in the detail, it will (unless I be much mistaken) appear, that some confusion has arisen from the divisions of the secondary or mediate sense which have been adopted in different ages. It has long since been admitted that this was unquestionably the case as to the three-fold division of the patristical and Roman

Catholic schools. Later divines have, assuredly with a much closer approximation to critical accuracy, followed Glassius in referring all such meanings to one of the three general heads of allegory, type, or parable. To myself it appears that the question would be ridded of some encumbrances, and no injury offered to the legitimate interpretation of Scripture, by considering the former (allegory) as a *generic* term, equally applicable to both the latter. *The type being an allegory founded on that which is real, the parable an allegory founded on that which is simply possible, or even in some cases imaginary.* The illustrations usually given in systematic works of the allegory, considered as a distinct species, are very few, and those few by no means satisfactory; and the only reason for so considering it which should seem to possess even the show of authority, is that drawn from the well-known passage of St. Paul, in which the history of Sarah and Hagar is said to be allegorized (αλληγορουμενα). I can certainly however see no objection to regarding the term as used in this place ge-

*nerically*, and the narrative itself as having the same typical and prefigurative character which has been uniformly ascribed to that of Jacob and Esau <sup>a</sup>.

The two species of type and parable are separated by a line sufficiently marked and obvious to all; nor is there any doubt, as to the latter, of the extent to which it prevails, or the places where it may be found in the sacred volume of either covenant <sup>b</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Thus Gen. ii. 2. compared with Hebrews iv. 2. may be explained, by regarding the sabbath as typical of the rest of the children of God, the spiritual Israel. In Ephesians chap. v. the institution of marriage is typical of the spiritual union between our Lord and his church. Psalm xix. 4. compared with Romans x. 18. and Deuteronomy xxx. 12. with Romans x. 6, 7. present certainly some difficulty; but that difficulty will not be removed by considering the 19th Psalm or the passage of Deuteronomy as allegorical. 1 Corinthians v. 7, 8. may be merely figurative language; or if leaven were symbolical of malice and unrighteousness, it might be regarded as one of the many types which made up the ceremonial law. 2 Corinthians iii. 7, 13, 14. appears equally the exposition of a type. The well-known application of the law, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn*, appears to me, I confess, like our Lord's *Not a sparrow falleth to the ground*, a mere argument *a minori*. The above are all the passages adduced as allegorical by Waterland, (Pref. to Scripture Vindicated, p. 14. note.)

<sup>b</sup> The many expositions of the parables for which we

The former presents more of difficulty on these points, and its investigation has given rise to much variety of opinion, and to some controversy. That wheresoever any person or thing is decidedly proposed in Scripture as the type of another, the *τυπος*, *σκια του μελλοντος*, it is to be at once acknowledged as such on that authority, it has been fully conceded. But here a question immediately arises as to the real extent in each case of the typical character so established. And on this point whatsoever may have been the practice of some, it has been unquestionably the uniform advice of

have been from time to time indebted to able and pious divines, appeared to preclude all necessity of entering upon any consideration of their general character, or of the allegorical language in which they are clothed. The student perhaps will need only to be reminded, that here, as in the case of many typical images, we are rather to keep in view the general drift and scope of the apologue, than to indulge in seeking a mystical intention in every expression which occurs in its detail. Of the faulty excess on this score, many examples will be found in Keach on the Parables; a work which (like his *Tropology*) has been long a text-book for one class of spiritual expositors, and has been reprinted within these few years.



the most considerate and intelligent writers on scriptural interpretation, *that we should abstain from, or use at least the greatest caution in, pushing the analogy beyond that point to which the authority of revelation has extended it.* Thus where we find St. Paul, by a singular usage perhaps of the word *τύπος*, expressing that connection and contrast which existed between the first and the second Adam, and his illustration of the subject, amounting strictly to this, *that as in (the one) Adam all die, so in (the one) Christ shall all be made alive*; are we therefore authorized to pursue this same idea of relation through all the circumstances of our first parents' creation and fall? to advance, that, as Eve was drawn forth from the side of Adam, so from the wounded side of our Redeemer was drawn his mystic consort, the church of the faithful? that as Adam *was made on the sixth day*, and did eat the fruit *at the sixth hour*, so our Lord was crucified on the same day, and at the same hour? that as Adam's soul was in spiritual darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour, so the

earth was covered by the material darkness which succeeded our Lord's death, for the same space of time<sup>c</sup>? That Moses, again, as being (though in an infinitely inferior sense and degree) the mediator of a covenant, and the captain and deliverer of the visible and typical Israel of God, bore a figurative and predictive relation to the eternal and heavenly captain of our salvation, the apostle plainly insinuates: but are we hence entitled to argue, that Moses was also in his birth, education, in all the general outline, in short, of his history, equally the type of Christ? are we to believe that the business of a shepherd, exercised by him previously to his important mission, prefigured the higher office of the great Shepherd of the sheep, who, until after his own mission had been fully made known and ratified to the people, did not announce himself in that character<sup>d</sup>? Can we look for any confirmation of our belief

<sup>c</sup> These, with many similar examples of imaginary resemblance, will be found in Vertue's *Parallels*, article *Adam*: they are chiefly from patristical sources.

<sup>d</sup> Taylor, *Christ Revealed*, (Lond. 1653.) repr. Trevecka, 1766. chap. vii.

in the divinity of Christ from the typical application of the passage in Exodus which declares Moses to have been made *a god to Pharaoh*<sup>e</sup>, or for any real similarity in the death of Moses on mount Abarim, and of the Saviour on Golgotha<sup>f</sup>? Can we follow the expositor who urges that the gift of the Holy Spirit was prefigured by the appointment of Joshua, while he asserts Joshua to be (with much greater probability) the type also of the Saviour himself, and that on the very ground, among others, that he succeeded Moses<sup>g</sup>? That David in his kingly power and character typified the future king of the spiritual Israel; that in the sufferings and sorrows which caused him so repeatedly and pathetically to pour out his soul before God, he bore, however faintly and imperfectly, the figure of him who for us suffered and sorrowed as no man ever has or could, we readily grant: and though, in this case, we may not be able to assent to all that is proposed even

<sup>e</sup> Exod. vii. 1. Vertue. The application is 'Tertullian's.

<sup>f</sup> Taylor, p. 44.

<sup>g</sup> Taylor, *ibid*.

by a Horne or a Horsley, yet by denying this typical character of the royal Psalmist, we incur the danger at least of sacrificing to the excessive and ungrounded indulgence of critical refinement, means of personal edification and advancement in the love of Christ, which no man may despise or overlook with safety. But are these feelings, we would ask, enhanced or enlivened, are we not rather disposed to suspect and doubt the grounds on which we have hitherto cherished them, when it is urged to us by our partners in this blessed faith and hope of the Christian, that the voice and harp of David expelling the evil spirit of Saul prefigured the authority with which our Lord *commanded the evil spirits, and they obeyed him*; that the rescue of David's two wives from the hands of the Amalekites prefigured the rescue of the spiritual sisters, Israel and Judah, both the daughters of one mother, the heavenly Jerusalem<sup>h</sup>? It were easy to occupy a much longer time with instances which shew

<sup>h</sup> 1 Samuel xxx. 17, 18. Analytical View of Christianity, p. 193.

abundantly the necessity and wisdom of *restricting in general our exposition of scriptural types to those express points in which the Scripture itself authorizes us to consider them as typical, or which immediately flow from the nature of the relation or character which we are taught to regard as constituting the analogy between the type and its antitype.* Thus we readily grant that Aaron, as the appointed high priest of Jehovah, was a real and intelligible type of him who is made for us a high priest for ever; and that the sacrifices which he offered were typical. Admitting this, we can see no absurdity in admitting also, that when in his sacerdotal character he stood betwixt the living and the dead, and stayed the plague from Israel, he exhibited the prefiguration and symbol of a yet higher deliverance<sup>i</sup>. And there are types, it may be added, of so general and extensive a character, as to admit, by the fairest deductions of criticism, the application of much that is

<sup>i</sup> Glassius de Typis; who adduces it as a “typus illatus.” I should rather consider it as rising out of the typical and priestly character of Aaron.

said concerning them to the known character and features of their established antitype. This appears to be especially the case with respect to the sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual, and the analogy existing between the typical and the spiritual Israel; an analogy which I cannot but regard as intentionally and largely adumbrated in all the prophetic writings. And here I would suggest, that a very considerable safeguard may be found in the restriction mentioned in a former Lecture, as proposed by some divines of the last century: *that we are not, namely, to look for any secondary or mystical sense in the Scriptures, but such as is inherent in and consequential upon the typical; that typical sense being, as I have stated, determined by and limited to the real and essential points of analogy between the correspondent objects.* Nor am I certain that some advantage may not be derived from considering *the types of Scripture as divisible into those which are strictly of a prophetic or prefigurative character, and those which appear to be simply analogical; both equally being the intention of the*



Spirit which has pronounced them to be such by the mouths of those who spoke and wrote only under his influence, but *the one more peculiarly adapted to give evidence to the Gospel, the other to illustrate and enforce that which the Gospel teaches*<sup>k</sup>.

Further, it has doubtless occurred to every inquirer after divine truth, (and from hence perhaps originally sprung the theory of accommodation,) that some things are quoted or alluded to in the New Testament as bearing a mystical and typical character; in which, without the express sanction of such authority, we should hardly have suspected its existence. This would naturally lead us to inquire, whether the

<sup>k</sup> The establishment of this latter as the genuine and legitimate character and intent of much that is typical, appears to be the drift of the well known passage in St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he asserts, that the Israelites were, in certain circumstances of their journey through the desert, examples or types to the future church of God. That he did not use the expression *τύπος* in the lower sense of example merely, is, I think, evident from the manner in which the whole context insinuates the secondary and spiritual intention of the cloud, the sea, the food, and the water, which were made the instruments of their protection and support.

secondary and spiritual meaning of Scripture narratives is to be confined to these alone: whether there may not yet be other personages and other circumstances, in which the believer is permitted to look for some adumbration of the Saviour and his work.

The affirmative side of this question has had the support of many eminent and pious expositors; of more than one indeed whose judgment in restricting the excessive use of spiritual interpretation gives double force to their concession on this point<sup>1</sup>. It has been urged, that St. Paul himself, in declaring that there were many objects within the temple of which his immediate intention did not suffer him *to speak particularly*, does virtually authorize us to consider these also, and by consequence other matters connected with the ceremonial law, as typically significant, that in many other cases the type is so obvious as to offer and force itself, as it were, on

<sup>1</sup> “Typica proculdubio multa sunt de quibus Deus expressis verbis non pronunciavit quod talia sunt.” Salden apud Rambach, De Sensu Myst. p. 26.

the notice and acceptance of the believer, and that this has been admitted with respect to more than one direct and literal prophecy of the Old Testament. Sykes himself, for example, an expositor but little inclined to err on the side of concession to received opinions, admits this to be the case at least in three well known instances; the prophecy concerning Shiloh, the weeks of Daniel, and the predictive reference of Haggai to our Lord's appearance in his temple. It has been objected, lastly, that in questioning the existence of such typical references as have not the express authority of revelation, we are doing injury to the general and acknowledged character of the elder covenant, and cutting off one of the most lawful and copious sources of Christian edification. These are assuredly arguments which, proceeding from men of sober minds and well versed in Scripture, demand at least our serious attention. And there are doubtless some resemblances and coincidences in the details and history of the two covenants so striking, as to impress at once on the pious

reader the almost positive conviction, that the objects which present them must have been so connected in the original intention of Him who gave the Scripture. Thus in the histories of Joseph and of Joshua, (though neither be distinctly referred to by the writers of the New Testament as prefiguring our Lord,) there are many points which would seem to justify the Christian in so regarding them. Thus, if we do not admit that our Lord's argument recorded in the 7th chapter of St. John amounts to a positive assertion that he was typified by the manna given in the wilderness, and that even the title of St. Paul (*βρωμα πνευματικον*) does not immediately attach its mystical purport to our Lord himself, we may yet, from the general character of typical things, and from the known analogy of that mystic rock from which flowed the living waters, fairly conclude that it was so. The ordinance too of the cities of refuge, and the liberation of the offender by the death of the high priest, presents a yet more striking instance of such an adumbration, unnoticed by the

writers of the New Testament. But the number of such cases is so limited, the examples adduced, even by systematic writers anxious to establish the point, are at times so questionable and irrelevant, and the use made of the liberty thus assumed has been frequently so injudicious, that it is scarcely possible for the student to be too strongly guarded against a practice, which, in the hands of persons especially of a lively and fervid imagination, has often exposed that religion, which in truth is founded upon a rock, to the unmerited sneers and cavils of the unbeliever, and has contributed perhaps in many instances to shake the faith and arouse the suspicions even of the more candid inquirer after truth. Thus, where one writer argues in favour of the typical character of Noah, that his name by a cabalistic transposition of the letters signifies *grace*<sup>m</sup>; where another sees in the greater part of that patriarch's history a type of our Lord, but in his sin of drunkenness the type of man's guilt; in Shem, again, the type of

<sup>m</sup> M'Ewen on Types, p. 20. ed. 1821.

him who has covered the spiritual nakedness of mankind with his covenant, and also of those upon whom the garment of salvation has been laid, and who see not their own nakedness<sup>n</sup>; when these and the like imaginations (and the history of scriptural exposition affords but too many) are obtruded as the real and unquestionable intentions of the Holy Spirit of truth and wisdom, what accession, we would ask, of probability, or even of power to influence the heart and the affections, is gained to those great evangelical doctrines, which every true believer has received and learnt from a less questionable source; what advantage

<sup>n</sup> Analytical View of Christianity, pp. 67, &c. As I have found it desirable to allude more than once to this short but comprehensive work, I would express my belief in and respect for the Christian spirit and intention with which it is written. Nor would I insinuate that those which I deem its errors originate with the anonymous author. I have referred to it, in fact, chiefly as being among the latest and fullest examples of that fanciful determination and application of the *spiritual sense*, which we have seen prevailing from the earliest ages. In dedicating his work expressly to the *sceptic*, it is to be regretted that the author lost sight of the ancient patristical canon; “Argumentum mysticum non valet ad probanda fidei dogmata.”



is not given to those who would malevolently represent the whole fabric of our religion as unfounded upon proof, and unsupportable by any fair and legitimate methods of argument?

It has been the usual custom of systematic writers, to join with the other branches of our present subject the consideration of the *mystical* or *symbolical* meaning (as it is more generally termed) of individual *words*, whether literally denoting objects animate or inanimate, or the active or passive attributes of such objects. That such a symbolical intention was by the earlier allegorists held really to exist throughout the whole vocabulary (if we may so speak) of Scripture, and that much and often fruitless labour was spent upon its investigation, there can be little or no doubt; nor has it been neglected in a later day, though its chief cultivators have indeed at all times been found among those who have indulged in very considerable licence as to every branch of spiritual interpretation. More considerate and prudent critics have evidently been induced to doubt, whether all that was usu-

ally so considered might not with greater safety as well as accuracy be regarded as simply *figurative*, as belonging, that is, rather to the general and native character of the Hebrew, perhaps of all Oriental, eloquence and poetry, than to any preordained system of allegorical and spiritual correspondency°. Upon the hypothesis indeed of such a correspondency, no inconsiderable suspicion is thrown by the certainty, that it has been adapted with equal facility and equal success to the philosophical reveries of Philo and of Hutchinson, to the darkest superstitions of the middle, and the wildest fanaticism of later ages; that it has accommodated itself with the same pliability to the exclusive theory of the most rigid predestinarianism, and to the vague and indeterminate mysticism of Behmen and of Swedenborg. For a full conviction of the extreme uncertainty both of the grounds on which the hypothesis rests, and of the

° This appears to be the opinion of Lancaster, certainly one of the most learned and sensible writers on this subject. (Prelim. Discourse to Daubuz on Revel. p. 2.)

method in which it has been applied, it may be sufficient to refer the student to the inspection (however cursory) of any of those *Collections* or *Dictionaries* of *symbolical terms*, in which the labour of expositors thus disposed has from time to time been employed<sup>p</sup>. I cannot therefore but think that we expose ourselves to less danger, both of falling into personal error, and of throwing doubt and discredit upon the sacred text, by regarding those insulated words and expressions, which were of old esteemed the authoritative and definite, though mysterious, indications of higher things, as possessing that value and significance only, which may be fairly attached to them without departing from the laws of interpretation generally applicable to all written or spoken composition, sacred or profane.

But (it has been urged, and that by high

<sup>p</sup> Those of Rhab. Maurus, H. Lauretus, Gurtler, and Vitringa have been mentioned; to these may be added Westhemerus de Tropis S. S. (fol.) and Hackspan's Termini, &c. Philos. Theol. per Durrium, Altdorf, 1664. Others are probably to be met with, as Ravanellus, who has much matter of this description in his Dictionary.

authorities) the symbolical language, especially of the prophetic and more highly wrought portions of holy writ, has a peculiar character of its own; inferring, as it should seem, that it must have some peculiar and exclusive source, some mysterious system of relations, to which we might in vain search for a parallel in any other quarter<sup>9</sup>. Let this be admitted to bear at first sight some appearance of truth; yet upon examination we shall be led to ask, whether they who have made such assertions recollected that we have no uninspired and contemporary remains in the Hebrew, or any cognate dialect, which we can bring into comparison with the volume of inspiration, whether they were sufficiently aware of the highly metaphorical nature of all language, and whether they had weighed the difficulty and uncertainty attendant upon all the details of the theory which they inclined to maintain?

That the figurative language of Scripture is not capable of illustration from various

<sup>9</sup> See Jones on the Figurative Language of Scripture, Lect. I. p. 7. ed. 1811. and frequently elsewhere.

sources, that some part of its symbols, those especially in more common use, may not have been, like the hieroglyphics of old, purely conventional, and that he who neglects its study can hope to be deemed a competent or useful expositor, I shall hardly be suspected of advancing: but that we are entitled, nay, called upon, to affix a secondary and spiritual import to almost every significant word in Scripture; that we may reason from the symbolical meaning of the word to that of the context, instead of suffering the sense of the former to be determined by the plain and obvious intention of the latter; that by such a symbolical acceptance of individual words we are permitted to give a new character to even the clearest moral precepts, and the simplest narratives of the sacred text<sup>r</sup>; that, lastly, our acquiescence in the meanings which

<sup>r</sup> That this is no exaggerated statement of the main principles of the allegorical schools of the ancient fathers, and the modern Cocceians, the reader has already seen. The republication of the works of Keach, Brown, M'Ewen, and others, proves, that the indulgence of excessive licence on this point has still its advocates; nor is it any recommendation to their cause that it is embraced

fanciful (though possibly sincere and pious) believers may attach to every separate portion or expression of God's word, is to be esteemed a test of our personal spirituality and knowledge of him<sup>s</sup>, the informed Christian will scarcely be disposed to grant.

It may be further inquired, to what extent the secondary and spiritual sense of Scripture once discovered and acquiesced in, may with propriety and safety be applied to the purposes of doctrine and instruction. Wheresoever we believe this sense, upon the direct authority of our

by the disciples of Dr. Hawker, and other teachers of the same complexion. (See Cottle's *Strictures on the Plymouth Antinomians*, p. 84.)

<sup>s</sup> "Some may object against this, that the hair of a man's head is a mean thing to represent so great and glorious a thing as the church of Christ. To which I answer, Glory over me thou infidelity, thou firstborn of the Devil, if thou canst." (*Samson's Hair*, an eminent Representation of the Church of God, by Edm. Jones. Trevecka, 1777.) That many better informed Christians are content on these main points to adopt the benevolent and tolerant spirit of Bishop Horne, (see the termination of his Preface to the Psalms,) I firmly believe; but that the feelings here exemplified do yet exist, and are expressed in some quarters with the most uncharitable bitterness, is certainly true.



Lord or his disciples, to be inherent in any passage of Scripture, that passage becomes of necessity invested with a distinct and real argumentative value. To us indeed it may be of *subordinate* value, because for the positions so confirmed and illustrated by the inspired teachers, we have the more immediate and direct evidence of their own specific and literal declarations; but still wherever it appears that our own reasonings may be fortified by the adduction of that also which has been previously so adduced by them, we have (I conceive) a full right to demand that it should be regarded as a legitimate means of proof. And this appears to be (by the uniform admission of the ablest theologians of all ages) the utmost extent to which we can consider any secondary or allegorical sense as having a character strictly argumentative. But the degrees and shades of moral probability are, we know, very numerous; and there seems to be more than one case in which, if the great truths which we teach cannot be actually established by, they may yet derive not only much of lively and strik-

ing illustration, but somewhat even of collateral support, from such spiritual expositions of the detail, as appear to be most obviously insinuated by the typical and prefigurative character which the New Testament has *generically* attributed to certain personages and objects occupying a prominent station in the Old. There appears no very cogent reason why this extension, if I may so term it, of declared and acknowledged types should be proscribed in our attempts to instruct and edify a Christian people. With respect to those spiritual expositions which have their ground in supposed analogies, more or less plausible, with the typical and mystic character of similar objects, circumstances, or incidents of holy writ, *their* admission, (if they be admitted at all,) and their management in the application, must require much more of judgment and of caution. "This," (says the learned and judicious Waterland,) "This, " to speak freely my opinion, appears to be " a work of such a kind, as scarcely one in " a thousand will be fit to be trusted with. " It will" (he continues) " be exceeding dif-

“ difficult to draw out mystical meanings with  
“ sufficient certainty beyond what our in-  
“ fallible guides in the New Testament  
“ have already *drawn out for us*, or have  
“ *plainly pointed out to us*†.” I would add,  
that both the difficulty and the danger of  
misapplying the secondary sense become  
greater in proportion as we endeavour to  
accommodate it to any other purpose than  
that which is directly and exclusively of a  
spiritual nature—our own private and per-  
sonal advancement in the faith, the love,  
the knowledge and the service of our Crea-  
tor and Redeemer. Such appear to be the  
chief restrictions to which it is desirable to  
subject the investigation and application of  
that secondary and spiritual sense which  
we admit and affirm, upon the highest and  
most unquestionable authority, to pervade  
no inconsiderable portion of the Law and  
the Prophets. To investigate every subor-  
dinate principle by which its existence may  
be ascertained, or at least rendered proba-  
ble, and its uses regulated, would be a task

† Preface to Scripture Vindicated.

far beyond the limits or intention of these Lectures ; in fact, would involve little less than the detailed exposition of all those passages of Scripture which appear to speak in parables. Much too has been done for this division of our subject by writers whose works are readily accessible, and to whose intelligence and authority in the various branches of biblical interpretation I can advance no pretensions<sup>u</sup>. If I have dedicated therefore the larger portion of these Lectures to the history of the practice in question, it was done in the conviction, that that history would not only afford some opportunity for useful and practical inferences, but that it had not as yet employed, in our own country at least, the hand of any among those scholars, whose labours might easily have rendered my own needless, if not presumptuous.

To conclude ; it may not possibly be

<sup>u</sup> It will be readily perceived, that in some points I have ventured to differ from these high authorities, especially from Bishop Marsh. I could wish however to be understood never to do this without the respect due to learning and station, or a proper diffidence in my own views and opinions on a subject of so much intricacy.

objected, that the limitations for which I have ventured (both in the present, and, occasionally, in previous discourses) to contend, are such as bespeak a low and unjustifiable notion of the significance and spirituality of the inspired writings, and would, if strictly complied with, cut off at the very root one of the most efficacious means by which the hearing and reading of those writings may be rendered profitable for the instruction and edification of believers. To the former imputation, (which has from time to time been thrown upon expositors whose faith and piety we are now so far from calling in question, that most of us would gladly be found like-minded,) I do not see how any one is liable, who fully acknowledges their whole contents to have been written at the suggestion and under the influence of the Spirit of God, who believes all that they relate to have been brought to pass, all that they prescribe to have been ordained, in the exercise of the most consummate goodness and wisdom, and with a constant and uniform reference to the great and mysterious gift of a divine

Saviour, even though he should fail to recognise any distinct allusion to or prefiguration of that Saviour, where others have seen and rejoiced in it. That the beneficial application of Scripture is crippled and confined by such restrictions, that the *fine gold* is rendered less valuable, and less applicable to the purposes of currency and usefulness by its separation from that alloy which is foreign to its nature, and which might subject even its real and intrinsic worth to doubt and depreciation, we should be careful at least to assert. It should be considered too, that much of that in which the cautious expositor would scruple to find matter of type or prophecy, may yet be safely, and, under the divine grace and blessing, profitably applied on the ground of analogy, and in many other ways, which the intelligence and practice of him who conscientiously strives to inform himself in the word and will of God, and to use that word for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, will readily suggest. In admitting too that extension of the typical character, in things authorita-



tively declared to possess that character, of which I have so lately spoken, no inconsiderable field for exposition directly and unequivocally spiritual appears to be left open ; and, above all, in insisting upon the authoritative and conclusive nature of the testimony which our Lord and his followers have given to the spiritual import of the Law and the Prophets, the greatest and highest source of the edification to be derived from those earlier records of divine truth has, I trust, been kept inviolate. Of spiritual exposition, thus grounded and thus guarded, the use and application cannot be too earnestly recommended, cannot, I would add my own firm conviction, be safely or reasonably impeached and questioned. The philosophical or sceptical divine may indeed object to us the obscurity of the Scriptures thus viewed and interpreted, but it yet remains to be proved, that their obscurity (be it what it may) is to be removed or lessened by divesting them of the character under which the Jewish and Christian church have from the very age of their composition regarded them.

The doctrine of the Messiah's advent, office, and character, the adumbration of and preparation for that spiritual kingdom which he should in the fullness of time establish and spread unto the uttermost ends of the world, form a necessarily integral part of every provision, every ordinance, every declaration and promise of the Old Testament.

Take away this master-key, and the elder sanctuary of divine truth presents a door closed, which no man may open. Its contents, indeed, under this self-called rational view, may be thought to open a wider field for the exertions of human ingenuity, for the free and luxuriant speculations of conjectural criticism; but, on the score of intelligibility, as well as upon that of Christian faith and Christian edification, the loss is incalculable.

In these views then of scriptural truth may we ourselves be preserved, and enabled to preserve others. To these may they, who are still in darkness or error, be brought, by Him who can alone control the wills and affections of his weak and sinful creatures ;

and may their value and efficacy be shewn forth, and their Author glorified, by the establishment of his spiritual kingdom in our hearts, *not in the word only, but in power.*











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